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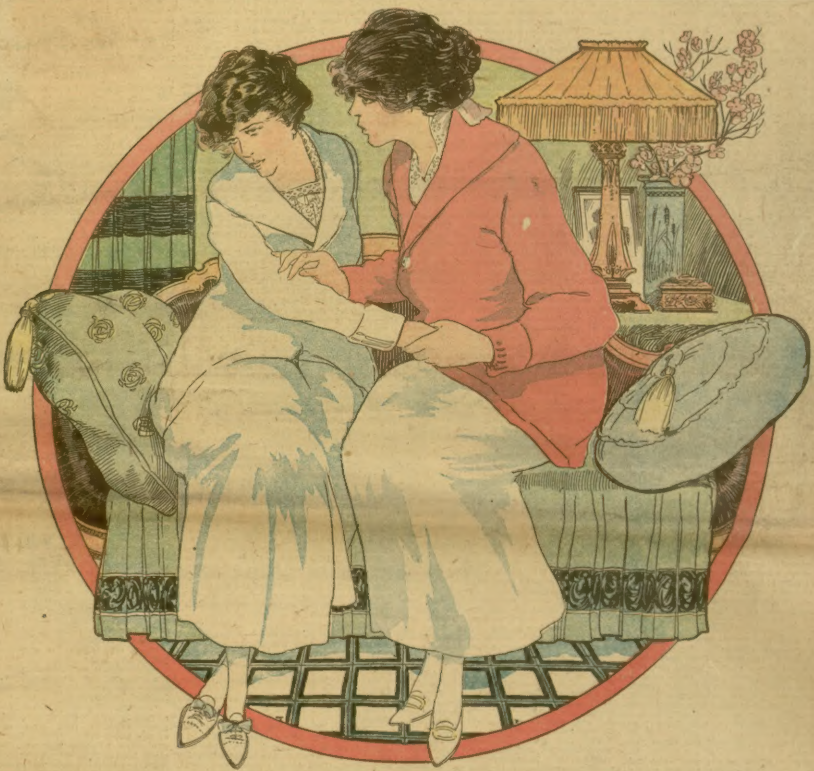


Irma Brooke's Trial

Or, Madame Fortuna's Prophecy -:- -:- By C. Mackie

CHAPTER I.

IT WAS a golden October day, with a fresh breeze blowing and the sunshine dappling the frost-bitten grass of the lawns, when Irma Brooke came out into the veranda of her father's country home, and looked away over the rolling Connecticut hills to the faint blue haze that marked Long Island Sound, in the far distance.

"It is a pity to leave Sunset Hill now," sighed Irma. "I wish father would consent to my remaining here all winter."

Her companion looked at her in wide-eyed dismay. "Stay in this isolated place during the cold winter months when one has the choice of New York and all its social delights?" wondered Grace Scoville. "Irma Brooke, you should have been the daughter of a Connecticut farmer instead of the petted child of a millionaire who builds a palace in the hills and occasionally occupies it as a pleasant change from other palatial homes about the country!"

Irma laughed and put her arm around Grace's slim waist. "Don't preach, my dear," she chided. "Come with me and walk in the 'brown October woods' and pick up some hickory nuts. There was a sharp frost last night—see the gorgeous coloring of the foliage yonder. I can just glimpse the Castle chimneys."

She pointed to an opposite hill where chimneys of gray stone were visible thru the thinning foliage.

"It must be occupied," remarked Grace, her black eyes dreamily fixed on a soft cloud of smoke rising from the chimneys.

"How interesting! The Castle has been vacant for twenty years—ever since it was built by its demented owner, who died suddenly just as it was completed. I've built more childish romances about that old place—Hannah Terrill declares the place is haunted."

"Br-r-r-r-r-!" shivered Grace. "Come let us hasten to our nutting, dear. Shall we take Sandos?"

"Yes—father's strict orders when I go about Sunset Hill. I will go and fetch him."

Grace Scoville, Irma's school friend and house guest, watched the graceful form of the young heiress as she ran down the steps and around the terrace toward the stables. Irma Brooke was beautiful, with copper-brown hair, hazel eyes and eyebrows delicately penciled in black, with curling black lashes. A creamy complexion with faint rose coloring of cheek and deeper tinting of perfect lips, made the girl exquisitely beautiful. And Irma was as charming as she was lovely.

In spite of a vague jealousy of her more fortunate friend, Grace Scoville loved Irma dearly, and was indebted to John Brooke's daughter for most of the pleasures she had enjoyed since leaving the fashionable school where her mother had struggled to keep her and where she had met Irma Brooke.

Now, Mrs. Scoville, a gentlewoman who had seen better days, kept a fashionable boarding-house in New York, and Grace was free to accept Irma's many invitations and to enjoy many of her advantages.

Grace Scoville was beautiful in her own way—she was slender, dark-haired, sloe-eyed, olive-skinned, with perfect features and rather a fascinating manner.

The two girls were stopping at Sunset Hill for a few weeks under the chaperonage of Irma's ex-governess, Miss Hortense Ladue. John Brooke, having lost his wife while Irma was a little child, devoted himself to his banking interests in the city and to his study of ancient history. Irma, whom he worshiped and indulged in every whim, was quite unspoiled by his devotion.

Suddenly a great Dane bounded around the corner of the veranda, trying to curb his delight in the morning's liberty.

"Poor Sandos is frantic with joy," laughed Irma, as she followed the dog. "Here is your sweater, Grace; I brought it when I fetched my own." She tossed Grace's scarlet coat into her friend's hands and shrugged into her own white wool garment. "Hannah insisted upon my taking a package of sandwiches. I told her one ate nuts when nutting, but she said her experience was that nuts never satisfied a healthy appetite accentuated by October air." She stuffed a little paper-wrapped package into the pocket of her sweater. "Come along, honey!"

The two girls raced down the leaf-strewn driveway followed by the great Dane, that soon outdistanced them and arrived first at the rustic gateway at the foot of the slope.

After they had passed thru the gate and crossed the road into the forest, Irma turned shining eyes upon her friend.

"Grace, I've such an idea!"

"What is it now?" smiled Grace.

"Let us go around by the Castle—the Castle woods are full of hickory trees, and we may catch a glimpse of the new tenants."

"I would rather not," said Grace, uneasily. "The woods themselves are eerie enough for me without including a haunted house in our walk."

"Nonsense, Grace! You don't know how curious I am about the Castle. I have known about it all my days, and I have always felt such a keen interest in it. You see it is our nearest neighbor on the west—the property adjoins ours, and its loneliness and mystery have always been connected with Sunset Hill, somehow! Anyway, I don't believe in ghosts!"

Grace sighed resignedly.

"Have your own way, Irma," she said. "Do hear Sandos thrashing around in the thicket. I suppose he will protect us, no matter what happens."

"Father says Sandos is a lion for strength and a dog for faithfulness and loyalty," replied Irma. "Isn't the woodsy smell delightful, Grace?"

"It's rather cool in the deep shade, tho," said the more practical Grace, as they went along the narrow aisles of the woods.

Now and then the sun pierced the trees and flashed on the great Dane's tawny coat as he bounded ahead.

"This is the boundary line," remarked Irma, carelessly, as they struggled under a barbed-wire fence. "Now we are on the Castle property."

"Why do they call it the Castle?" asked Grace. "We are not supposed to own castles in this democratic country."

"It was built by a man named Castle," replied Irma. "What is that, Grace?" she demanded sharply.

They paused and stared affrightedly ahead, where Sandos, standing in the path with rigid body and rising crest, was growling ominously. Just as the dog was galvanized into action and leaped forward at some unseen foe, there was the sharp report of a gun from the thicket. Sandos sprang into the air and fell back dead upon the ground.

CHAPTER II.

IRMA screamed and ran forward, followed more slowly by Grace. When they reached the body of the great Dane Irma went down on her knees and cried silently over the faithful head with its glazing eyes. Grace stood near looking fearfully from right to left, peering into the nearby thicket as if expecting a second discharge from the deadly weapon.

"Who could have done it, Irma?" she whispered uneasily.

Irma rose and dashed the tears from her eyes.

"Some careless sportsman," she said indignantly. "Of course, we are on private ground, but it does seem as if any man capable of obtaining a gunner's license could tell the difference between a dog and a squirrel—and there is very little game here besides birds and squirrels."

"I am afraid, Irma!" said Grace, who was shivering as with ague. "Come, let us go home. We can send some one for the body of poor faithful Sandos."

"Wait a moment, Grace." Irma gathered an armful of dead leaves and scattered them over Sandos' still form. Then she brought more until the dog's body was heaped high with the brown covering.

"I am ready. Come," she said sadly.

"Oh!" screamed Grace.

"Don't be frightened," said a rich contralto voice, and a woman emerged from the thicket—a woman of such commanding presence that the two girls involuntarily clasped each other's hands.

She was remarkably tall and nobly proportioned, with masses of blue-black hair banded across her broad forehead and rising in silky coils that added to her height. Her eyes were dark blue and piercingly bright now, but they were to learn that those eyes were as changeable as the treacherous sea. Her haughty features were rather coarsely molded, but she was handsome; and when she smiled she was fascinatingly beautiful.

Her gown of some soft black clinging material, quite unsuited for a walk in the autumn woods, was relieved at throat and wrists with ruffles of white lace, and over her shoulders was a shawl of scarlet Canton crepe, which was vastly becoming to her dark complexion. Her olive hands were remarkably small and shapely and loaded with costly rings.

She stood there looking at the two girls with her sparkling blue eyes, while they gazed back at her, disturbed at her sudden appearance before them, and vaguely uneasy at her advent in the Castle woods.

"Don't be frightened," she repeated soothingly. "I am so sorry about the poor dog. It was my man, Jacob, who did it. He was after squirrels. I suppose he was startled at sight of the dog and fired."

"He must be rather stupid," remarked Irma. "Sandos had not harmed him—he had merely scented danger and growled. I don't know what father will say!"

Tears filled her eyes at the thought of her father's grief over the death of his favorite dog, yet if Irma could have foreseen the future, she would have known that John Brooke would be overshadowed by another and a greater tragedy in his life, so that the death of Sandos would be but an incidental pang.

"You are John Brooke's daughter, are you not?" asked the stranger, coolly.

"You know my father, then?" was Irma's answer.

The woman smiled.

"I did not say that, my dear; I merely recognized you as the daughter of John Brooke, millionaire—you were pointed out to me by some one in the village yesterday."

"I am Irma Brooke," admitted the girl. "And you? Perhaps you are the new tenant at the Castle?"

The blue eyes lost their sparkle and were cold and gray as a winter sea.

"What do you know about the Castle?" asked the newcomer, curtly, and as Irma turned away with a haughty gesture, she added eagerly: "Pardon my abruptness. I am so much that way that I offend. I am not of your country, Miss Brooke, but I have lived here for a long time, and should understand your manners and customs. But I am stupid indeed! Pray forgive me, and let me introduce myself as Madame Jiles—Fortuna Jiles, if you please—the new owner of the gray house on the hill!"

Irma turned and held out a cold little hand. Her heart was very heavy over the death of Sandos, and she felt a strange depression stealing over her usually happy spirits. She welcomed the newcomer to Hill Village, and said that she and her father would be glad to have neighbors at the Castle.

"It has been vacant so many years," she added.

"Save for the ghosts," laughed Grace.

"Ghosts?" repeated Madame Fortuna, her strange eyes flashing ominously. "Who hints of ghosts at the Castle? Ghosts have to do with dead things. At the Castle there is life—life!" She laughed musically. "Do you believe in ghosts, young ladies?"

"Not on a day like this!" retorted Irma.

"Then come with me. See, the Castle is only a little way beyond the pine trees, and I will be charmed if you will be my first callers and stop for luncheon. You can telephone your whereabouts to Sunset Hill, and I will show you my collection of pictures—and sing for you."

"You sing?" repeated Irma, with a puzzled look in her lovely eyes, then her face lighted with charming enthusiasm. "Can it be that you are the prima donna, Madame Jiles? Why, I have heard you sing 'Susanne.'"

"You have discovered me!" admitted Madame Fortuna, with a pretty gesture of despair. "Now, you will not refuse to come and lunch with me and my family of French poodles? Ah, my dears, I am a lonely woman, but not often do I have to beg an audience!"

The two girls protested that they were honored and delighted by the invitation, and reassuring themselves that a telephone message to Miss Ladue would excuse their absence, they followed their new acquaintance thru a path in the pines.

Irma, keenly observant as her father had trained her to be in the woods, noted many landmarks as they proceeded thru the Castle property, and her roving eyes encountered something which at the moment startled her, but which she instantly dismissed in her interest at the first glimpse of the Castle itself.

CHAPTER III.

THE Castle was a great irregular mass of gray stone almost hidden by immense pine and hemlock trees. The windows were small, and many of them appeared shuttered, giving the east wall of the house a desolate expression. But the south front, with its many windows turned to the sun, was cheerful enough, and in one high window was a box of scarlet geraniums.

A parrot chained to a tall perch screamed at them as they mounted a broad flight of steps to the upper terrace. Irma turned and glanced back at the grounds sloping down to a small artificial lake.

A gardener, wheeling a barrow full of dead leaves, had halted in his tracks and was staring after them. Before Irma resumed her way she thought the man made an urgent beckoning gesture, as if he would compel her to leave the premises. But Madame Fortuna's voice recalled her.

"Miss Brooke! Don't mind my gardener—he is rather simple, poor fellow. He leaves me tomorrow!" Her voice ended rather ominously, and Irma was sure that the gardener's fate had that moment been decided by his mistress. "But come inside—I am sure luncheon must be ready. Pierre promised me quail. I am such an epicure!" she laughed amusedly. "Let me introduce you to my darling parrot—Motley, I call him, for his coat is of so many colors and he acts the buffoon. Ah, naughty boy." Madame Fortuna screamed in rage as the parrot bit viciously at her slender finger, and apparently forgetting her guests, the woman slapped and buffeted the captive bird until it fell to the floor, the length of its silver chain, and cowered there, a bunch of palpitating plumage, its yellow eyes blazing wickedly.

"You will tell me I have a naughty temper," panted Madame Fortuna, her writhing lips relaxing into a smile. Her eyes were black as a midnight sea, but gradually, like dawn breaking over the black waste, a smile lighted them, and by the time they were inside the stiffly furnished drawing-room they were blue and sunshiny again.

"I like eyes that are steady and true," thought Irma, uneasily.

"I will take you upstairs myself, so that you may refresh your toilets before luncheon, and then, perhaps, Miss Brooke would like to telephone to her house," suggested Madame Fortuna, as she led the way up a wide stone staircase to the second floor.

They passed down a narrow corridor that ran east and west, and halfway down the east corridor she threw open a door.

"Pray enter, young ladies," she said cordially. "You will find every toilet requisite here, and I will send my maid to conduct you downstairs." With a dazzling smile she vanished, and the door closed with her going.

Irma and Grace exclaimed at the charming luxury of the room. The curtains were closely drawn, but the room was brilliantly illuminated by cleverly arranged electric lights. The hangings were of daintily flowered silks in a soft rose color, and the brass bedstead was gay with the same material. The dressing table was furnished with silver and ivory, and there were crystal bottles filled with perfumes and toilet waters. Adjoining was a little bathroom glittering with marble and silver.

Grace threw herself down in a great chair and sighed.

"Isn't this perfectly gorgeous, Irma? Fancy being a great singer and having everything one wants! I wonder if she would hear me sing?"

"Dear, I wish you would ask her," cried Irma, for she greatly admired Grace's sweet soprano voice. "If she encourages you—father will do the rest—you understand?"

"Irma, you are a darling!" exclaimed Grace, throwing her arms around her friend.

Still talking about their new acquaintance, and comparing her appearance with that of Madame Jiles, the prima donna they had seen the winter before during the opera season in New York, the girls freshened their appearance and sat down to wait.

A clock ticked musically on the mantel, and Irma pulled out her watch and compared the two timepieces.

"It is after two," she said uneasily. "I wonder if they have forgotten us, Grace?"

"How odd!" was Grace's answer. "Look, Irma!"

She was standing by one of the windows, and had pulled aside the silken draperies.

"There is no window here," she said wonderingly. "Only a blank wall!"

Irma convinced herself that this was so; then she went to the other draperies and pulled them aside. Grace was right. It was a room without windows.

While they stared at each other Madame Fortuna suddenly appeared before them. They had not heard the door open, nor any sound save the soft swish of her silk gown. She was smiling and her blue eyes were very brilliant.

"I hope you will not mind, Miss Brooke, if I have luncheon served in your room," she said sweetly. "There are repairs being made to my dining-room, and it will be most convenient if you will not object. Pierre will serve it at once—and I must excuse myself from being present, as I am called away upon urgent matters."

"But, Madame Jiles," protested Irma, "if that is the case Miss Scoville and I will leave at once. We cannot think of intruding upon your hospitality under the circumstances. Perhaps you will permit us to come again," and she smiled winningly at the older woman. "We will go now. Come, Grace."

She held out her hand to Grace Scoville. But Madame Fortuna's majestic form was interposed between the girls.

"I pray you will not attempt to go home now," she said gravely. "There is something I must say to you first—something of dire importance to you, Irma Brooke."

Irma paled and drew away.

"You have something to say to me?" she gasped. "Who are you, Madame Fortuna Jiles, that you speak to me in that tone?"

Madame Jiles laughed lightly. "Do not be so frightened, little one," she soothed the frightened girl. "It may be that the great song bird amuses herself with peering into the future—and I, Madame Fortuna—la, la! what a pretty name for a soothsayer—would prophesy something now!"

"What is it?" whispered Irma, almost speechless with fear.

Madame Fortuna leaned forward and spoke clearly, incisively:

"I would predict, Irma Brooke, that when you learn what I have to tell you, that nothing—nothing under God's Heaven—will induce you to leave my Castle!"

With the last words she turned and glided from the room, and with her departure the two girls heard the key turned in the lock and the sliding of a heavy bolt. They were prisoners in the Castle, and Madame Fortuna's odd prophecy was ringing in their ears.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Irma Brooke and Grace Scoville found themselves alone in the room without windows, they immediately rushed to the door thru which Madame Fortuna had vanished and tried to open it. But it was locked, as well as another door in a corner, half hidden by a large rosewood wardrobe. The adjoining bathroom was guiltless of any other door, and the only window was placed high in the wall and was at best only a tiny aperture.

Once more in the large room Irma Brooke gathered her scattered wits and proceeded to comfort her agitated companion.

"Now, see here, Grace," she said practically, "we have evidently fallen into the hands of an unscrupulous woman—she is holding us here for some reason, perhaps ransom from my father. In the meantime we must not lose our heads. We must appear to be satisfied to remain in the Castle, even while we rack our brains for an avenue of escape. We may be in greater danger than we realize, and as there are two of us, I propose that one of us never relaxes her vigilance. While one sleeps the other will watch—we will take turns; and while one converses with Madame Fortuna, the other will be on guard to find a solution to this puzzling predicament we are in. Suppose we did not have each other to talk to. Suppose only one of us had been enticed here!"

Grace nodded. "And Irma," she said thoughtfully, "don't you think it rather a strange accident that her servant should mistake a great dog like Sandos for a squirrel?"

"Yes, I did think so—but now I have changed my mind. I believe that Sandos was shot intentionally."

"Irma! And the man—how did he vanish so quickly? I am sure that I heard no sound from the time the shot was fired until she stood before us."

"Madame Fortuna fired the shot."

"Madame Fortuna? Why, she might have done so!"

"I am sure she did," said Irma, confidently. "As we came thru the pine path to the Castle, I happened to glance down, and I saw a small pearl-handled revolver lying between the roots of a tree. I was about to pick it up, but we came in sight of the Castle and I quite forgot it. Now I believe it was Madame Fortuna's revolver."

Grace was silent for a few moments before she said:

"If Sandos had not been with us, Irma, I wonder if she would have used that pistol on either you or me?" She laughed nervously.

"Hardly. She recognized the dog as a dangerous opponent and disposed of him. Probably she goes armed all of the time; some women do. I cannot determine whether she was bound toward Sunset Hill, or whether our meeting there in the woods was a mere coincidence of which she took advantage."

"She could not expect to meet us in the woods—we rarely walk there—and it is not likely any one at Sunset Hill would inform her——" Grace stopped abruptly and bent her head in a listening attitude. "I thought I heard the notes of a piano, Irma. I wonder if she really is Madame Jiles, the singer?"

Irma was stoutly denying her belief in this, when as if in refutation there floated to them a tenderly beautiful voice singing Gounod's "Ave Maria."

"No one but Jiles could sing it like that," murmured Irma, with tears in her eyes.

"But Jiles could never be so cruel as Madame Fortuna," reminded Grace. "Irma, dear, aren't you hungry?"

Irma laughed. "Indeed I am, dear," she replied, "and I'm afraid I shall continue to be, for they have forgotten to send us any luncheon!"

"There are the sandwiches Hannah put up for us," suggested Grace.

They found the package in Irma's pocket, and as they ate the delicious chicken sandwiches that the Brooke's cook had prepared they discussed the alarming situation in which they had found themselves.

"Perhaps we may be able to attract the attention of the gardener—we might send a message to Sunset Hill," said Irma.

"We could telephone if we could find

the instrument," suggested Grace.

"If we could only escape from this room——" sighed Irma.

And as if the wish had evolved Madame Fortuna from the surrounding emptiness, the woman stood before them, majestic, smiling strangely. Her eyes were cold and gray now.

"My dears, why wear yourselves out with useless efforts to escape? When I am ready to let you go you may depart. And then? As I said before, nothing will drag you from my doors of your own accord! I would speak to Irma Brooke alone," she said coldly to Grace. "You may walk in the corridor, Miss Scoville; it is well guarded!" She threw open the door, and Grace went out, casting one backward look of love and solicitude at her friend. She feared Madame Fortuna meant treachery to Irma.

When they were alone the woman sat down beside Irma Brooke and looked into the lovely hazel eyes.

"You wish to go back to Sunset Hill?" she asked.

"Certainly," said Irma, stiffly. "I can promise you that your unusual behavior toward us will be overlooked——"

Madame Fortuna laughed ironically. "But, my dear girl, you are not in a position to dictate terms to me," she said. "Listen to what I have to tell you—and then if you wish to go home you may."

"Please begin, Madame Fortuna," cried Irma, impatiently. "I have little faith in any power you may have over me or mine—and if it is a matter of money my father will——"

The woman interrupted her with a fierce gesture.

"Money? It is not a matter of money, child. I am richer than your father with all his millions. Money cannot buy your liberty. Listen, Irma Brooke, where is your mother?"

"My mother?" cried Irma, amazed at the question. "Why, my dear mother died sixteen years ago when I was a little child—I scarcely remember her."

"You would recognize her again?" demanded the woman quickly.

Irma was trembling violently. "Of course I have her miniature—I wear it always," she touched her breast with an involuntary movement of protection; "but my mother has been dead many years. Why do you ask me such strange questions?"

"Because your mother did not die. She is alive and in this house now," said Madame Fortuna, impressively.

CHAPTER V.

IRMA sprang to her feet with a wild cry. "My mother alive? In this house? Impossible!" She sank back into her seat with trembling limbs. "My father would have known! He has mourned her as dead for many years—he has suffered—he would have known!" she repeated.

Madame Fortuna smiled patiently. "It is natural that you should be astounded at my news," she said kindly. "There is a story back of it all. Did you ever hear how your mother died?"

"Father told me once when I asked him that it happened in Switzerland. They were scaling a high peak in the Alps, when my dear mother slipped and fell into a crevasse. Her guide disappeared as well; their bodies were never recovered, altho my father remained in the vicinity for many weeks." Irma was sobbing softly.

"Well, your father was mistaken," said Madame Fortuna, and she could not conceal the malice in her tone. "I know that your mother slipped and fell, but she did not die. She recovered and has been in my care for sixteen years. I am now ready to restore her to her daughter—and perhaps to her husband," she ended cruelly.

"Take me to my mother!" cried Irma, passionately. "You must be a wicked woman to have separated two loving hearts! My father's life has been saddened, and I have never known a mother's loving care!"

"Sit down, my dear; our interview is not yet ended. There is a price to pay for the release of your mother."

"A price?" faltered the girl. "What can you mean? You say you are rich——"

"Rich? Yes, rich in everything save love! Material things I have in abundance, but the love of a husband, son, or daughter I never have had. Now I would buy it. I would buy you, Irma Brooke!"

"Buy me?"

"Yes. The price is your mother's liberty. You may gaze upon that poor prisoner and realize what it will mean to her to be restored to her husband. Her child she scarcely knows! Then, if you love your father, you will pay the price I ask. You will elect to remain with me as my adopted daughter in exchange for your mother's liberty."

"Why? Why are you so cruel?" demanded the girl, pale with terror.

"Because I hate your father. I have hated him always from the time when he chose Agatha Lane for his bride instead of me. I swore to be revenged—and I have been!" She laughed musically, and her merriment rang like a chime of silver bells.

"How could I love you as a daughter when you have brought so much sorrow into the lives of my dear parents?" asked Irma.

"Never mind that. I will teach you to love me in time. The sacrifice you will make for your mother's sake will ennoble you, Irma; you will be happy yet. We will travel the world over. You shall have beautiful clothes and everything that money and love can buy." Madame Fortuna leaned forward eagerly and scanned the girl's woebegone face. "Will you do it, Irma Brooke?"

"But my father? What explanation can be made of my absence?"

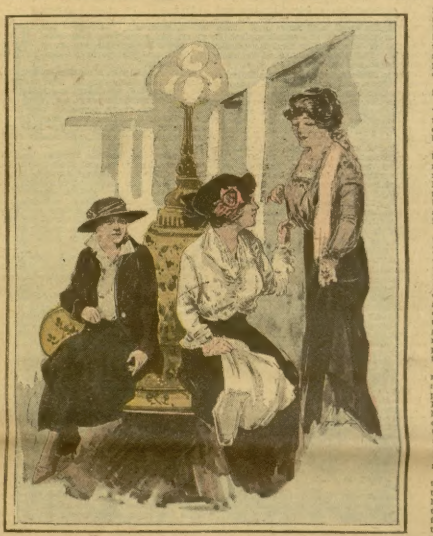
"Leave that to me, my dear; you will be supposed to have drowned in the river—or eloped with some unknown lover. I can take care of all that!"

"You are bound to break my father's heart in the end!" cried Irma despairingly. Then, thinking of the poor mother who had been parted from her husband for so many years, the girl's true nobility of character overcame her momentary weakness. "Take me to my mother, Madame Fortuna," she said quietly. "Convince me that it is indeed my mother who is here in your house, and I can make no sacrifice great enough to restore her to my father's arms."

"Now you are your father's daughter!" declared Madame Fortuna, with involuntary admiration. Then she checked herself and went on hurriedly: "I must keep this Grace Scoville with me for a while, for she is a dangerous person to have at large. I have waited for weeks to catch you alone, but at last I was compelled to bring her along, too. Oh, the Castle has been occupied for many years, my dear!" she laughed as she arose and went to the door.

"But—my mother?" cried Irma. "When am I to see her?"

"At 8 o'clock this evening. Calm yourself, my dear, and remember you are not to mention a word of this conversation to Grace Scoville. The penalty will be your mother's life! I have not waited fifteen years for this moment to be cheated of my revenge!"



"Nothing will induce you to leave my castle!"

She opened the door quickly, recalled Grace Scoville from her position before a window at the end of the corridor, closed the door upon the two girls and locked it.

"Pierre will bring dinner presently," she called thru the door.

"If it is not more substantial than the luncheon she promised I am afraid we will go hungry," commented Grace. Then noting her friend's sad preoccupation, she knelt down beside Irma and laid her dark curly head in her friend's lap.

"Listen, Irma, darling," she whispered. "I have had such a strange adventure. I don't want that woman to hear what I have to say."

Irma's ruddy head was bent over Grace's. "If it is more startling than I have had this afternoon, you will indeed surprise me," she said sadly. "Tell me, dear, what happened?"

"You remember that Madame Fortuna turned me out into the corridor, telling me that it was guarded at either end? Well, she was right. At one end was an elderly servant sewing busily by the open window. At the other end, where the corridor joins the hall, was a dried-up little Frenchman, polishing the silver doorknobs.

"I tried to engage the woman in conversation, but she only smiled and shook her head, and presently she went away, probably thinking the manservant sufficient guard over me. I sat down by the window, and had just taken my seat when I was startled by a man's face peering at me from among the branches of that great pine tree.

"I am sure he was the gardener that I noticed raking leaves this morning. He was quite young, Irma, and did not look in the least like a gardener, and he had such a courageous face and bright blue eyes. Well, he smiled and nodded at me, and then held up a small arrow with a bit of paper wound around the shaft. He signaled that he was to send it thru the window.

"I glanced around at the servant; his back was turned, so I motioned the gardener to shoot the arrow. He whipped a small bow from his pocket, took aim, and in a second the little arrow with its message fell at my feet. I had barely time to thrust it in the side of my shoe, when the servant turned around, and, speaking respectfully, said that he must close the window.

"I walked slowly down the corridor toward this door, and suddenly I was startled by the apparition of a beautiful woman who passed thru the hall at the end of the east corridor. She saw me and stood for an instant as if stunned at sight of a stranger in the house. Then she glided on and vanished from my sight!"

Grace lifted her head and gazed deeply into Irma's eager eyes.

"Irma darling, it is the strangest thing, but this woman—so beautiful and sad-looking, with her wealth of snow-white hair and her queenly bearing—was the living image of——" She hesitated as if afraid to speak.

"Go on, Grace, dear. Can't you see I am in agony?" cried Irma.

"She was the living embodiment of that painting which hangs in your father's room—the portrait of your mother!"

Next week's Ledger will contain the concluding chapters of this remarkable story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

The Same Distinction.

John Fiske, the historian, was once interrupted by his wife, who complained that their son had been very disrespectful to some neighbors. Mr. Fiske called the youngster into his study.

"My boy, is it true that you called Mrs. Jones a fool?"

The boy hung his head. "Yes, father."

"And did you call Mr. Jones a worse fool?"

"Yes, father."

Mr. Fiske frowned and pondered for a minute. Then he said:

"Well, my son, that is just about the distinction I should make."

WHY SHE BLUSHES.

They tell us of the blushing bride
  Who to the altar goes
Adown the aisle of a church
  Between the friend-filled rows.
There's Billy, whom she motored with,
  And Bob, with whom she swam.
There's Jack—she used to golf with him—
  And Steve, who called her "Lamb."
There's Ted, the football man she owned,
  And Don of tennis days.
There's Herbert, yes, and blond Eugene—
  They took her off to plays.
And there is Harry, high school beau,
  With whom she used to mush.
No wonder she's a "blushing bride"—
  Ye gods! She ought to blush!

* * *

HELPFUL SCHEMES.

"No," asserted the woman in the fussy hat, "we haven't had porterhouse steak for a long time. If you feel like buying it, all right, but as for me, I have to economize!"

"But my family likes good things to eat," sighed her friend in the tailor suit.

"Mercy!" snapped the person in the fussy hat, "don't they, tho! I'd like to see a family that didn't! But my husband told me some time ago that I would have to cut down on expenses, and I think it is a woman's duty to help all she can! Oh—will you look at those perfectly lovely lace neck things marked down to $1.50? Wait till I get one!"

"What are you going to wear it with?" inquired the tailored woman.

"Why—I don't know!" said her friend. "I haven't anything just now, but those things always come in handy. Yes, charge and send. So, as I said, I've been trying to do my best.

"Last night John groaned when hamburg steak came on, but I simply reminded him that he wanted to economize, and as long as he did we'd have hamburger three times a week. I alternate with lamb stew, and my butcher's bill is cut in two. Men don't seem to appreciate what you do for them! John is so growly at dinner time these days.

"The trouble is they want to keep their cake and eat it—did you ever in your life see handkerchiefs so cheap? Just look at them! Regular 50-cent quality and only 25 cents! I simply must take advantage of it! No, I have plenty, but I can lay them aside till I do need them, and they are such a bargain! Send these two dozen I've picked out! A woman can help so much, I think, by taking advantage of these bargains! Come on over to Jimps' with me! They advertised a wonderful sale of plaster ferneries, and I want to see what they are.

"As I was saying, men haven't the remotest idea of how to save money. After all John's lectures to me I found him phoning his tailor about a new suit, and I almost took the receiver out of his hand! Here his closet was full of clothes that would do perfectly well if the collars were sponged with alcohol and the pressing place around the corner had fixed them up and mended a few worn spots, yet here he was ordering a new suit!

"He tried to excuse himself by saying there was an important meeting of the heads of the concern next week, that he had to attend and he couldn't afford to look shabby because he stood in line for promotion. I pointed out to him that nobody ever really knows what a man has on, anyhow, and that he knew he couldn't afford it, and that people judged a man's finances by the way his wife dressed. I explained to him that I had a new gown coming home soon, and the bill would be rather large, because I knew that he didn't want me to be seen in horrid cheap things. He was real selfish and grumpy about it, and said I had plenty of clothes.

"There! Did you ever see ferneries equal to these for double the money? It would be a crime not to take advantage of the sale! No, I haven't any place for it now, but I'm bound to move this spring into an apartment with more windows and I can use it then. I think it improves a home so much to have these little womanly touches about it!

"Did you say you had to stop and phone about cream? Mercy! We haven't had cream since John told me to cut down! I stopped that right away, and he has to use milk in his coffee and on his breakfast food. I always take my coffee clear, anyhow, and, besides, cream makes me fat.

"You wouldn't believe how unreasonable John has been during this period of close money. First he tells me to cut down and then he rages because I do! Let's stop at Bickle's on our way—they are selling 80-cent chocolates for 50 cents today and I simply must have some. I think chocolate is so good for one's health, don't you?

"I've had to exercise my strength of mind to help John save, because he gets crazy every once in a while to go to some concert or lecture, and I say firmly, 'No!' It is so foolish to spend money for luxuries like that when we don't need to. I saved enough that way to give a luncheon and card party last week, but he didn't seem to appreciate my cleverness at all! Oh, come on! You don't have to get home—give them canned stuff for dinner! I'm dying to see the star in this musical comedy, and I'll treat to matinee tickets!

"You simply can't! Well, I must say you'll make yourself a slave to your family and they won't appreciate it a bit. I think a woman owes it to herself to brighten up her life all she can! Good-by—I'm going, anyhow!"

THE SPIDER'S AMBUSH

:-: :-: Or, :-: :-:

Strangely Mated Comrades

By Victor Ardmore

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CHAPTER IV.

RAINBAR stiffened his muscles for a leap toward the prowling man, and then thought better of it and lay still, awaiting developments. The person outside might not be an enemy, and it seemed well to see what he would do. Putting a check on his breathing, that there might not be any sound whatever, the man inside watched and studied.

The darkness defied all his attempts to learn what the prowler was like, and during a long pause there was no further manifestation. The head was stationary, and that was all Rainbar could tell about it. Perhaps five minutes passed, and then the window-way was again clear. The stranger had taken the visible part of himself away. Steps sounded briefly, appeared to recede, and after that came total silence.

Rainbar rose and looked out. The rain was now only a drizzle, and a breeze was stirring that was far more pleasant than the late sweep across the land. Trees were revealed as spots a bit darker than the night, but nothing more was to be seen.

A knock sounded at the door, and he turned back and opened the connecting way. A slight figure was beyond him, and a whisper came in Lucelia's voice.

"Somebody is outside!" she said, not wholly calm.

"How do you know?" he asked.

"There were steps, and the outer door was tried."

"What next?"

"Nothing. The bar you put up held fast, and no vigorous effort was made to get in. I heard the stranger move away, but whether he went far or only a few steps, I don't know. Altho we need help, I somehow had the feeling that I would do well to make no noise, and in spite of the fact that I may have let a friend pass on, I have the belief that trouble would have come had I called to him."

"Just when was this?"

"Possibly ten minutes ago."

"Then the prowler came from the front door to my window. He looked in, for I saw his head framed in the little square, but soon took himself off. Like you, I lay low and permitted him to go."

"Who do you think it was?"

"I don't know. Certainly, none of the men of the schooner, which shows him to be what you termed him, a stranger. I'm glad you said nothing when you heard him, for we don't know his character. Why should an honest man be moving about in this weather?"

"Perhaps because he saw the schooner in trouble, and wanted to give help."

"Unless very close to the scene of our trouble he could not see the Wide Awake. If he saw us come ashore, he acts mighty queer in his devotion to our interests."

"That's it!" Lucelia exclaimed quickly. "I can't reconcile his way with good will to us. A friend would be making a hallo to find us."

"Exactly! Still, pray don't get the notion that this means new danger for us. We are safe enough, but a fellow who lurks like him may be left alone without doing violence to good judgment."

"Are you armed?"

"No."

"Then take this revolver. It is loaded, and the cartridges are, of course, waterproof. I expect no attack, but such a toy is a wonderful persuader in time of distress."

Rainbar saw the revolver, for she had extended it, but he made no motion to take it.

"No," he returned. "Keep it yourself. I feel amply able to care for myself, for I have two fists and know how to use them, but the revolver may yet stand you in good use. Keep it! Yes, and hang to it for your very life."

"Why, you said, just now, that we were not in danger."

"What I don't know about the future would more than fill a whole library. Even if we had a full hundred peace advocates at our door I should still say, stick fast to that trinket until you sight the smoke of home. I think I'll go out and see if I can find our man."

"Aren't you afraid to go?"

"Not noticeably."

"I am afraid to have you, so consider that you are to stay here until day comes. I trust I am no coward, but to be alone here would get on my nerves. Stay!"

"I stay!" Rainbar promised.

"That is all for now, so I'll close the door. I've just looked at my watch, and darkness has only an hour or two to linger. Good night!"

He answered in a friendly tone, and the door closed. He sat down on the edge of his bunk, and now and then swept a glance at the window, but it was not of the prowler that he chiefly thought. Thinking, he hovered between amusement and exasperation.

"For a kidnaped man I'm getting on some!" he mused grimly. "The wronged captive has become the protector of his cruel captor, and is expected to take her out of peril. Humph! What's to prevent me from running away while I can? Nothing! Nothing—except Lucelia!"

The point was well made, but nothing of sentimental nature lay back of it. She was young, pretty, refined and clearly well-bred, but she had abducted him and he was angry. Had they been in a place of civilization he would have given her his opinion in full-grown words, but, tho his heart was untouched, his head was level. She was a woman, and possibly in danger.

"I've got to stick!" he admitted. "I'll see her safe, and then if she still hankers to steal me I shall have a word or two to say in parenthesis."

He rose and again looked out of the window. Nature was there, with its drip and drizzle and rustle, but that was all, unless he missed something. Turning back he lay down, reminded himself that, with the possibility that the killer of Ontario was near, he must not sleep again, and—promptly fell asleep.

When he awoke a knock was sounding at the door. He sprang up, opened the way, and saw Lucelia. The lamplight revealed a smile on her face.

"Day is here," she announced, "as you would notice but for this shut-in place. The sun is trying to dispel what is left of the mist, and it will soon be clear. I thought we ought to investigate, for it won't be long before we shall want breakfast."

"And I've been sleeping like a log! I'm ashamed. Well, to drop that point, we'll proceed to the nearest hotel at once. Ready to go?"

"Yes."

When outside they found that they could see quite well. If it was a trifle short of daylight the lack was slight, and the mist was every minute thinning. A good day was promised, but the sodden condition made walking unpleasant in places.

"Our first step," said Lucelia, "is naturally to see if the Wide Awake really escaped wreck."

"Yes, and if she went to smash, to hunt in her for food."

That was the plan, but they searched in vain for signs. The schooner was not cast ashore, nor visible in the offing. They went along the south shore for some distance, and then turned back and tried the opposite side. It had been learned that the land was shaped at the farthest east side like half an oval, and as they walked and this condition continued they began to look more earnestly at what was visible.

"Is it an island?" Lucelia asked uneasily.

"Either that or we are on a promontory."

"I do wish that fog would clear away wholly——"

Here Annabel interrupted excitedly: "What's that yonder?"

"A wreck!" Rainbar exclaimed.

"All that's left of the Wide Awake."

"I don't think so. This thing is dismasted, but she's hardly as large as the schooner, and seems to have been longer ashore than last night."

They had hurried on while they talked, and presently stood by the wreck. It had fared hard at some recent time, and the bows were stove in and yawning. Nobody was visible, but Rainbar noticed with interest that she was sound below her former water line. Hope was aroused that she would not prove useless to them, tho her boats were gone.

"A sloop," said Lucelia, "and part of her name is visible. Looks like the Early Morn."

"Which just fits the hour when we found her," Rainbar retorted. "She can be boarded easily, but I suppose we must wait until we have explored further. A land habitation, be it ever so humble, is what we need most. Shall we go on?"

"Yes."

They went, but the shore continued to bend away, and the idea grew that they were far from the mainland. While they walked the mist had been rising additionally, and they had a fairly good view to the north. First came half a mile of surprisingly rough water, and then treetops, but nothing more encouraging. Even that line of green was broken, as if two islands lay there side by side, divided by a little channel.

"We are in that horrible nest of islands that I've heard about," said Annabel, excitedly. "The real shore is far away, and we are captives here. It may be weeks before we get away. Better go back and pillage that sloop for food. I'm hungry!"

Nobody paid any attention to her, and they held to their course. The curve of the land ended, and they had something near to a straight way as they progressed, but every moment added to their belief that they were far from the mainland. The heart of the lake was certainly to the south, and water rolled in the north offing.

Keeping in motion stubbornly, they went another mile, and then knew the truth. The way swung around in a sharp bend and ended at turbulent water. Without any visible reason this liquid raced past wildly, leaping and frothing heavily, just as they had seen, previously, that it did on the north side. Here, again, was a green shore half a mile away, but all things were like an unknown wilderness.

They stood gazing at the ugly water for minutes in silence. Then Lucelia swung around to face her male companion.

"Do you know where we are?" she demanded curtly.

"Do you?" he asked evasively.

"Ever hear of Upper Crusoe?"

"Why, yes—I think so. It's an island."

"Just so, and it's this particular land. Its reputation is vile. Not that the island, itself, has any bad name, as far as I know, but the peculiar lay of the rocks below water causes a raceway along which the water rushes with force that makes it impassable. Upper Crusoe Island can be approached only at one side. Doesn't that fit this place?"

"It's Upper Crusoe!" cried Annabel. "Oh, we shall never get away alive, for we'll starve before we are rescued."

"Gammon!" exclaimed Rainbar. "Help will soon come. The schooner will return."

"That schooner is at the bottom of Ontario!" declared Annabel, with vigor.

"Anyhow, we are not going to let a little five by six island beat us. We can get away somehow, of our own volition. Watch and see."

He noticed that Lucelia shook her head the least possible bit, and he was not surprised. For many years Upper Crusoe had been left severely alone because it was ill-favored by nature.

Continuing, presently, they quickly demonstrated the fact that they were not on the mainland.

"It is Upper Crusoe Island," the girl repeated.

"Maybe," Rainbar admitted ruefully.

"The best thing we can do is to get back to that smashed sloop and see if there is food aboard," said Annabel, energetically. "If there is, we want to get it before it falls into the hands of that man who prowled around our shanty last night."

Rainbar started. He had briefly forgotten the man, but the wisdom of the new advice was clear.

"We will do as you say," he replied. "More than that, we'll take a short cut and avoid the long walk along the shore. Ready?"

They started promptly. The ribbon of clear space next to the water soon ended at thick woods, but the trees were, at first, large and well separated, so the wrap promised well. Five minutes later, however, the leader abruptly halted. There had been indications of low-lying land, and, suddenly, the ground showed thru a cover of water.

"Upper Crusoe, sure enough!" he admitted. "I've always heard it was nearly all swamp. Whether the late rain is largely responsible I can't say, but we may as well back out and take the longer way. It looks impassable beyond us."

They turned to the left and skirted the low area, and so, moving briskly, finally approached the wrecked sloop again. The question of what they would find there became acute. Rainbar theorized that there was about one chance in a hundred that food would be discovered. If it was not found, their future looked dark.

CHAPTER V.

IT WAS not hard to board the wreck, and there, as elsewhere, evidence was found that the sloop had been aground only a short time. The raffle and confusion were radical, but it was almost as if the crew had but just gone. The explorers agreed that a storm a week before was probably responsible for what had happened.

The hatches were closed, but when they had been opened and the three persons went below, lighted by the lamp brought from the shack, very little water was found anywhere. First examination showed that the little craft had been humbly furnished, and there was nothing of importance to be seen in or near the cabin. Rainbar did not forget their real mission, and he promptly looked for food.

Success attended the search. The sloop had carried a fair supply of eatables, including dried beef, canned milk, salmon and other articles. He laughed in delight.

"Lucky this is the year 1914!" he exclaimed. "Before the days of scientific canning we should have found but little stuff, and that much largely decayed, perhaps. We will take enough for three square meals, and if you'll carry it I'll tote along chairs and other conveniences for your use, tho we shall undoubtedly be taken off the island today."

"Don't be so sure!" cried pessimistic Annabel. "We may have to stay here a long time. Remember that there is a strange man near, and let us get all the food, several chairs, and a good supply of bedding to the shack—in fact, all the things that can possibly be of service to us."

"You are right," said Lucelia, quickly.

"The majority rules," Rainbar admitted. "We'll do as you say. Of course this cabin is far more comfortable than the shack, but if we used it as our quarters we might wake up some stormy night—if we really are marooned here for long—and find we had gone adrift. This would not be a safe place for us. To work!"

They began, and in an hour had the treasures in the shanty. There was food enough for about three weeks, blankets, chairs, cooking utensils and other articles. For castaways, they were not ill provided for then.

Conversation occasionally drifted to the man who had prowled about the shanty, and as Rainbar felt a vague uneasiness he started out to reconnoiter as soon as breakfast was eaten. He found no man, and no sign that any man had been there.

"Did you look in the swamp?" Annabel asked.

"Hardly! It is impassable, unless one wants to wade in water."

"The man may be there."

"If so, I hope he will stay."

"But he may be the 'killer of Ontario' that I've heard of."

"Nonsense."

Rainbar said it stoutly, but even with him the idea would not vanish that the man was a source of uneasiness. Why had he been on the island, and, if he was gone, how had he managed it? Even then the lake was rough for a boat, yet it had stilled a good deal since day broke.

"I wish," said Annabel, presently, "that we had potatoes for planting."

"Eh?" cried Rainbar.

"They would grow in a few months, and then we would have something to eat in winter. Now, don't you laugh!" the woman added forcibly, "for we are not clear of this place. If it's really Upper Crusoe it's a region where few ships ever go, for there is nothing to call them here, and we may be left a long while just as we are."

"The schooner will come back for us."

"How do you know but what schooner and crew are down among the fishes now?" Annabel retorted.

"Then we will get away of our own efforts. Why, bless you, that will be easy."

"Can you swim, sir?" Lucelia asked.

"About twenty feet on a stretch," Rainbar confessed, with some embarrassment. "Fact is, I never amounted to anything at it."

"And," Annabel reminded, "we have the wide, open lake on one side and that boiling, rock-ribbed raceway on the other three. Swim! No expert could get away in that manner."

"What about a raft?"

"What about its going to pieces and drowning us?"

"Oh, come now, don't be so dolorous. Still, we need not study that feature. Miss Parlin's friends will come to her relief."

It was the first time he had mentioned her name, and it fell like an icicle. The two women exchanged glances, and Rainbar became tongue-tied. Naturally, each party had always realized that the other must know who comprised the trio, but he had accentuated the point. It was, however, hardly the time to take up the ethics of kidnaping, and nobody broached the subject.

Rainbar had a new idea. He did not expect to be on the island more than a few hours, but there was a remote possibility that the mention of a raft might be the first step in an actual necessity. The sloop would supply wood, but something else was needed to construct it. Tools were all essential.

"I think," he said suddenly, "I'll visit the Early Morn again. Our wood is a trifle large for the stove, so I'll see if there is an ax on shipboard. It will solve that problem."

He started, and all went with him. At the end of half an hour careful searching had failed to develop either an ax, an adze, an auger, or any other carpenter's implement. Not so much as a chisel was to be found. Ropes, too, were singularly lacking.

"It's odd," he remarked, standing by his companions. "Such things belong with a vessel, and yet they are not here. Too bad!"

"Our firewood is all right," Lucelia answered.

"Yes, but—well, I wanted those tools."

"You were thinking of making a raft," said Annabel, bluntly.

"A raft? What for?"

"Not to burn," she dryly returned. "Well, as the things are not here, better look for potatoes and take my advice on that point."

He was about to reply when his roving gaze developed something new. He took a few steps and picked the something up. Then he stood erect.

"Well," he commented, in some surprise.

"A Chinaman's shoe," Lucelia said, wonderingly.

"It's of no use," asserted Annabel, "for it is badly worn. Anyhow, none of us could conscientiously wear the footgear of a heathen."

"That is not the point," returned the finder. "I am surprised to find such a thing here—and yet, why so? Probably the cook of the Early Morn was a Chinaman. It seemed odd at first to see this in a lake sloop."

He flung the soiled shoe down and turned away. He was ready to go, and as nobody objected they left the vessel.

"Shall we make a circuit of the island?" he asked.

"I think I will go to the shack," Lucelia replied. "You can use your eyes for all of us."

To Rainbar she seemed singularly apathetic for a shipwrecked person, but he made no remonstrance, and started alone, moving toward the south. The women went toward the shanty, but halfway along Lucelia made an excuse to linger behind her servant, and was soon alone. Then she scurried to one side, went a few rods, and paused where a hollow showed in the ground under a group of bushes. Some litter was in the depression, and she scooped it up carefully. A few movements, and articles came into view that looked odd there.

Side by side lay an ax, a hammer, two augers, and various other implements peculiar to the calling of a carpenter.

"They are still safe!" she murmured. "I wish I had a better hiding-place for them, but where would it be found? I will merely cover them more carefully, and it's not likely he will find them."

Meanwhile, Rainbar was walking briskly along the south side of the island. Anxious to sight a craft of some sort, as the first step toward getting away from Upper Crusoe, he used his eyes keenly, but saw only the wide, unbroken expanse of water, and not even the bite of a sail was on the horizon.

"Fine outlook!" he grumbled. "Nobody afloat hereabouts, and only boiling waters to the north. Of course some craft will soon show up, but if none did we might find it hard to escape from this man-forsaken bit of land. Queer what became of the ship's carpenter's tools."

He held his course until the west end of the island was reached. At that point the raceway again became visible, the water foaming and leaping all along its course as it drove against the many rocks that vainly tried to bar its course. He shook his head disapprovingly.

"I've heard of you before," he commented aloud. "Impassable! So say men far wiser in such things than I, and I accept their judgment. When we go it must be southward, right out into the open lake. Hang it, why doesn't some sailboat or something else show up?"

None appeared, and as he scowled at the open way it was clear that he was not taking life on Upper Crusoe so kindly as was Miss Lucelia Parlin.

Continuing his way, he recalled his idea that he might have to encounter difficulties in supplying firewood without the help of an ax, and he entered the woods to see if any amount of fallen dry branches lay there. He had gone only a few rods when something drove all thoughts of fires from his mind.

A spot moved among the trees within easy eyesight, and he came to a full stop. A living creature was there, but one so grotesque that he was briefly unable to say whether it was human or animal. This indecision was only momentary, and he stood staring at a humpbacked, repulsive-looking man who was attired in full Chinese dress.

This man was coming directly toward him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE stranger swung around so as to be fully visible, and Rainbar saw that he was a Chinaman. This told but a part of the story, for the man was unlike any he had seen before. His deformed back was accentuated by his lack of height, and by his remarkable breadth of shoulders, the combination of abnormal possessions making a forbidding whole, while his strangely long arms added force to the whole. A huge head and coarse, repulsive face furnished crowning ugliness.

Rainbar was no coward, but he did not want that creature to know of the shipwrecked trio, and he quickly stepped behind a thicket. Thus screened he had a chance to escape discovery, while watch on his part thru the several bushes was easy.

The Chinaman continued his course, but a call suddenly sounded at one side.

"Ling Fong!"

The hunchback swung around, and, like Rainbar, saw three other Chinamen advancing. One of them added other words that were unintelligible to the American, and he who had been called Ling Fong changed his direction and walked toward the three. They met, exchanged speech, and then turned and moved toward the heart of the swamp.

Previously, Rainbar's personal knowledge of Chinamen had been confined to harmless individuals who worked in laundries, but he did not make the mistake of believing all of their race harmless. Every nation had criminals, and as Celestial pirates scourged the coast of their native land, a desperado on Ontario was quite possible.

Startled and worried, when he remembered the women under his care, his first impulse was to get away as soon as possible, but a more resolute impulse changed his plan.

Resolved to track the men to their stopping-place he had taken two steps in pursuit when a hand was laid upon his arm. Wheeling, he saw Lucelia.

"Don't go," she whispered.

"But——"

"I saw the men, and know what you intended. Don't do it! Don't risk discovery. Let us get out of this horrible swamp while we can."

She spoke hurriedly, and her color of face was lacking, but back of the perturbation were signs of courage Rainbar noticed even then.

"I thought," he said, shifting on his feet uneasily, "that I might borrow a boat of them."

"Wrong, sir! You had no such plan in your mind," she returned quickly. "Like me, you see danger from those men, and were going to investigate. I beg that you will do nothing of the kind. Let us get away from that dreadful hunchback."

"He is probably only a harmless laundryman——"

"No such creature as that ever followed an innocent calling. This man was formed by nature to be a pest and a criminal. You realize that as well as I do. His body and face are a horror, and his dreadful arms—— Oh! he reminds me of a loathsome spider!"

She broke off, shuddering, and Rainbar yielded the point.

"Of course I will do as you wish," he answered soothingly. "Very likely they would not loan us a boat, and I'll build the raft, instead. We will keep away from them."

"Will they keep away from us?" she demanded swiftly.

"We will compel them to. I must get started on the raft right away, and construct it in defiance of the fact that we lack tools and that I've thus far seen no small ropes on the wreck. Also, I'll build a big fire and get it ablaze to call for civilized help——"

"The Chinamen would see the fire first."

"True! The raft is the thing."

"The first thing is to get away from here. Come!"

She caught at his arm and pulled nervously, and Rainbar did not oppose her wishes. They went, and he barely avoided a deep sigh of relief when they drew clear of the swamp. Not timidity, but regard for the safety of the women led him to feel creepings of horror when he recalled the spider-like man with the misshapen back.

"We'll have a look at the open side of the lake," he said, with forced cheerfulness. "It is time that the schooner appeared, or relief came for you in some other form."

Odd expressions flitted across Lucelia's face. She had private reasons for knowing that the only hope of rescue lay in the possible return of the Wide Awake. Only Captain Delcann and his men knew she had been on the lake, and if they were lost in the squall rescue was far away.

The view of the south side of the island was had, but no sail was to be seen.

"Let's go again to the wreck of the Early Morn," Rainbar advised. "It is almost impossible to believe that all tools have disappeared from its lower part. I've overlooked them."

They reached the sloop, and the search was renewed. Rainbar saw every part that might hold what he wanted, and again he was unsuccessful.

"It is very odd," he muttered, when they finally stood idle on the deck. "The Early Morn was caught in a squall and crushed on this island, her crew probably being lost to a man. The mast broke short off a little above the deck, and went adrift with everything attached to it. Thus far all is clear, but there is an almost utter absence of ropes, and no carpenter's tools, tho all vessels carry them. With such tools I could construct a raft, but they are lacking. What in the world can have become of them?"

"That's a mystery," Lucelia replied, averting her face.

"The problem is," Rainbar added, "how to make a raft without tools or ropes. Yes, and without casks for a foundation, for even casks are lacking. Doors furnish a starting-point, but, if launched alone, would upset and drown us all. Boards are plentiful, if detached from the frame of the sloop, but how can they be detached and bound together without anything to do it with?"

"We can take that up later."

"Now is the proper time."

"Why the haste?"

Rainbar made an eloquent gesture toward the swamp.

"How about the Spider and his men?"

"We must avoid them."

"As long as we can do that, well and good, but such avoidance will be impossible for long. Even now they may know we are here, and as the sloop was stocked with provisions until we took them away, the Chinamen will be visiting her presently——"

He stopped short and faced the swamp, his brows drawn and his expression worried.

"I understand one thing now," he added. "It was Ling Fong and his men who took the tools from here, and they are now in some lair of theirs in the depths of the low land yonder."

"What would they want of them?"

Rainbar gazed at the questioner in astonishment.

"Why, what does anybody want of axes, augers, chisels and the like?"

"I see now," replied Lucelia, who had plainly understood before.

There was brief silence. She was thinking about a little depression in the earth beyond the cabin, wherein were the carpenter's tools she had uncovered and recovered such a short time before. Remembering them she was wrestling with a problem she found hard to settle.

Rainbar's mind was equally active, and what he had in mind caused him to clinch his hands and scowl at the deck-planks like one contemplating a desperate act. Such an act was not only under consideration but decided upon. He was going secretly to the Spider's lair to search for the tools.

Granted that the Chinamen were as dangerous as he believed, there was great peril in any such work. To be discovered was probably to die at their hands.

It was no surmise based upon trivialities, for, leaving the looks of Ling Fong out of consideration, why should law-abiding men lurk in the swamp of Upper Crusoe?

Arousing from these meditations after a short while, he swept the south face of the lake with keen attention. The only hope of rescue was from that point, for the wild raceway elsewhere forbade approach even by rowboat. The open water was before him, but, as before, undotted by sail or keel. Upper Crusoe was a prison for the wrecked trio.

They left the sloop, and it was worthy of attention that Lucelia did not mention the articles concealed in the depression. As much as she feared the Chinamen she was determined to keep the tools hidden, the reasons seeming powerful to her.

When they reached the shack Annabel was invisible, and they had the place to themselves. Lucelia soon noticed the odd badge on the table where they had left it, and picked it up.

"What can it be?" she asked. "No school or college would have an emblem as large as this, and if you are certain it is not the badge of either an American or Canadian police officer or detective——"

"I am certain," Rainbar replied.

"It puzzles me. Then, too, it has some money value, for it seems to be solid silver, so why should it be here?"

"Lost by some transient visitor, probably."

"The pin is in good order, and it would not readily unhook. Would the Chinamen have such a thing?"

"I doubt it."

"Then who would that came here? Note the lettering—'L. C. U. E. W.' What can it mean? Possibly the 'C' is an abbreviation of China, but what Chinaman would have a badge with a Greek cross on it?"

She was about to say more, but was interrupted as Annabel ran into the cabin. The woman was pale and frightened, and she shut the door, latched it, and then dragged the table up against it as further security.

"Get your weapons ready!" she exclaimed, her voice husky. "I've just had an awful scare, and our lives may be in danger. Get ready to fight, for I've seen something horrible!"

Further chapters of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

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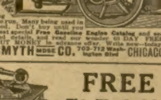

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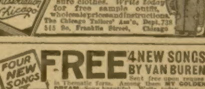

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The Danger Line

Or, Banished to Blandford

By Ernest A. Young

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE car passed so close to King and Zella that, dark as it was, there was no mistaking the chuckle-headed convict at the gear. "That tells us why he wasn't enthusiastic over helping us in our plan to escape," whispered King.

The splutter from the unmuffled motor became louder as it got under way. At the same time a shout from the Horrocks crowd told the fugitives that the escape of some one with the car had been discovered. The croaking voice of Horrocks was uppermost in the furious protest, and King could see the shadowy forms of the men racing up the slope. Horrocks could only find breath to rave and yell orders, most of which were impossible of execution.

Franklin had not turned on the lights of the machine, and the black monster was almost invisible as it tore down the grade, passing the short open stretch and entering the deeper darkness where the road ran thru the woods.

After his first sense of chagrin over the trick of Franklin, King realized that the flight of the convict with the motor might not count wholly to their disadvantage.

"Horrocks will think we are the ones who have run away with the car," he said, with a faint chuckle. "They will be all mixed up in their reckonings, and it may be better for us than if we had tried to get off with the machine ourselves."

"But how are we to get away?" protested Zella.

"What means have they for pursuit of the car?"

"Horses—that is all."

"A hopeless chance unless the gasoline tank of the car goes dry. Perhaps we can get hold of the horses."

"The gasoline will hold out," said Zella. "Bryson always sees that it is filled. Horrocks has given orders that the car be kept always ready for a long journey so it could be off at a moment's notice."

"Probably he counts on needing it for a quick getaway. Won't this give him a bad scare? If he thinks you and I are in that car he will look for trouble from outside."

"Horrocks always wins," said Zella, with slow emphasis. "There have been many attempts to drive him to the wall; they all failed. I have heard his boasts. It has always been that way."

"You think he is a human invincible," King said.

"He may be invincible, but not human," she asserted.

"It looks as if Ben Franklin had won the first trick in this game. He has the car, and at the pace he is going I don't see how anything short of an earthquake can stop the machine in time to do Horrocks any good."

"Horrocks will manage it some way; he always does," repeated the girl so hopelessly that her companion felt moved to a deeper sympathy than he had felt before.

"We will go up nearer the house so as to keep tabs on what they are doing," King said, a little later. "It is so dark now that there is small chance of our being detected. They won't be on such keen lookout for us just now, anyway."

Keeping within the deeper shadow of the big barn they came to where they could command a view of the house door. They were in time to see Horrocks squirm across the dooryard and pause at the broad stone step. Zella drew back, clinging to King's arm.

"He has the eyes of a cat!" she whispered. "I know he can see in the dark."

"I wouldn't mind taking hold of his wizened neck!" said King. "So, if he does get a glimpse of us——"

The opening of the house door interrupted, and in the light that streamed from within they saw Jerry Bryson.

"It is done!" the man cried excitedly.

"You stopped them? You were in time?" screeched Horrocks.

"I was in time, and the car was stopped. Your plan succeeded."

"Did they wreck the car?" Horrocks demanded.

"The car wasn't damaged, they believe."

"But how about the son of Wallingford King and the traitor-cat? Did they get them?"

"I don't know. They couldn't say as yet."

"They couldn't get by, Jerry. They'll get them; oh, yes, they'll be sure to get them!" croaked the cripple.

"There goes the telephone bell again," exclaimed Bryson, and he hurriedly left the doorway to answer the summons.

Horrocks, on the steps, let out a parrot-like cackle of laughter. "They'll surely get the son of Wallingford King and the traitor-cat!" he repeated.

Zella was tugging at the arm of her companion, and he allowed her to draw him away to a safer distance from the house. For a brief space neither spoke. King was too amazed to know what comment to make. Was Horrocks indeed in league with diabolical agencies? was the rather absurd question he was impelled to ask himself. The car had been stopped in its flight; so much of the cripple's plan had succeeded, and it would have been the same had King and Zella been its occupants. Bryson had told of the happening with too much positiveness to leave any doubt. It began to look to King, in spite of his practical present-day training, as if the half-superstitious belief in the invincibility of Horrocks was plausible.

"You can see," the girl was saying. "You thought nothing short of an earthquake could stop the car, but it was stopped, and some plan of Horrocks did it. He always thinks of a way."

"It must be he has some way of setting up a 'quake," said King. "But it seems they don't know who was in the car, which looks as if Franklin wasn't caught. As long as they believe it was we who ran away with the car they won't be looking for us up here."

"They will soon discover the truth, and then Horrocks will set another plan working. It would have been better, Mr. King, if you had not come here."

A sudden impulse caused him to bend and look eagerly into her face. "Are you sorry I came—Zella?" he asked.

She was trembling, and the hot blood rushed to her face. "If it should turn out as it did with my father and with the two strangers, almost a year ago——" she whispered.

Then she became silent. He had taken her hands and held them tightly, and as he touched his lips to hers, he saw that there were tears in her eyes. And yet she smiled.

"No, Zella, you are not a child," he decided, voicing the answer to the question which he had asked repeatedly of himself. "When I get you free of this infernal place," he added, "I will show you that I'm not just addled with a bit of sentiment when I say I love you and that I'm going to want the chance to look out for you as a steady contract. That's a queer way to put it, you think. But I'm no cad to talk stuff to a girl that she wouldn't listen to if she could escape."

The house door opened again, and the light streaming out from within showed Bryson at the opening. Horrocks crouched on the step with his lobster legs, as King called them, folded under him.

"Tell me," the cripple cried, before the other had time to speak. "Did Gridley catch them yet? What does he say?"

"Gridley is certain they could not have gotten past the camp, as he has pickets out. But he hasn't found them yet."

Horrocks let out a snarl of rage. Even partial failure seemed to excite him fearfully. "Of what good are the pickets," he raved, "if they have let that pair slip thru their fingers? Tell Gridley to scour the woods, to round them up at any cost. And you go down and run the car back before the son of Wallingford King gets hold of it again. But likely it is smashed so it won't go."

"Gridley says he thinks the car is all right," said Bryson. "When it came to the logs you had them throw across the road to stop the car, the machine swung to one side, plunged down over some stumps, and into a windrow of slashings. There it stuck with the wheels clear of the ground and the engine still kicking. Excepting for a bent mud-guard and scratched paint, Gridley says the machine is all right."

Horrocks was silent for a brief space. It was evident matters were far from being satisfactory to him. In the meantime the words of Bryson explained to King how they had managed to stop the machine at a point on the road opposite the lumber camp. The order to obstruct the road had been telephoned, and the men must have worked fast to accomplish it in time.

But what had become of Franklin? The lights not being switched on, how could the driver have seen the obstruction? If he had been going at the same pace as at the start it would have been all his life was worth to have jumped. Then, the lumbermen apparently had found no signs of him.

"Telephone Gridley again," Horrocks broke in. "Tell him to get the fugitives at all hazards—if it takes bullets to do it! But no—let there be no shooting except as a last resort," the cripple added. "It might stir up even the stupid, cowardly people at the village. They are afraid of me; that is good. But it won't do to push them too far. Some of them know that the son of Wallingford King came up here tonight. Oh, it is an infernal business! The jig may soon be up with the whole of us!"

Bryson entered the house again, and once more the tinkle of the telephone call sounded. Horrocks followed his man into the house, and a moment afterward Bryson came out and hurried down the road.

"He will come back with the car as Horrocks ordered," said King in a low voice to Zella.

"And every man at the camp will be pressed into service to keep us from getting away," whispered the girl.

"There is a pretty light guard at the house just now," said King after Bryson had passed from view. "Horrocks can do little except with his wits, and Adam is minus even the wits. I thought there were two of the lumbermen in the bunch when they were down at the bonfire, but they seem to have disappeared. What do you make of that, Miss Zella?"

"They are probably posted as pickets near the house. Horrocks always has the place guarded so nobody can approach undetected."

"You spoke of an old, abandoned road leading to the village. Tell me more about that," said King.

"It leads from this road just before you come to the lumber camp," Zella explained. "It was thrown up by the town as a public highway three years ago. A freshet nearly demolished a bridge, and it would cost the town too much to repair it. It is twelve miles to the village by that route. Even with the car there would be small chance of our getting thru that way."

"A small chance," said King, "is worth gambling on at a pinch. Hark! Bryson is coming with the machine now. When he gets here it will be our turn to try for a getaway!"

CHAPTER IX.

FROM the moment of King's arrival at the Blandford station, incident had followed incident like the scenes flashed upon a moving-picture reel. Contrary to a common impression, when the moments are crowded with events the hours seem to be lengthened beyond all ordinary calculations.

Just as Bryson came in sight with the car the house door opened again and Horrocks writhed his way out upon the step. At the same time a clock in the dwelling struck twelve. Immediately two other clocks in the house struck in with their clangor.

King tried to look at his watch, doubting the truth of what the clocks were saying. But he could not see the face of his timepiece, for they stood in the shadow of the ell and it was almost pitch-dark.

"The clocks are always kept close to the correct time," Zella whispered. "But it seems as if more of the night had passed."

The motor swung around in front of the barn and backed until its lights lit up the road below the house. Bryson shut off the power and stepped from the car. "Nothing doing," he said. "They found no sign of King or the girl."

"Gridley has been fooled by the son of Wallingford King," croaked Horrocks. "Why didn't you look for yourself?"

"I did look for tracks," Bryson replied. "There were none near the spot where the car struck the logs and was thrown out of the road. Gridley got in, and we came back over the straight piece of road just this side of the camp. Gridley looked sharp for tracks, and he decided that the occupants left the car at this end of the straight strip and let the machine run wild. It kept close to the middle of the road till it hit the logs."

"Well," Horrocks cut in, "if Gridley found the tracks, what more did he do about it? Did he try to follow them, or did he go to sleep and dream of chasing rabbits?"

"The tracks led into a thicket by the roadside, and there he lost them. I left him with some of his men beating up the bushes for the game."

"What sort of tracks?" Horrocks persisted. "The girl couldn't run fast thru a thicket, and it is so dark they couldn't travel far without coming back into the open."

Bryson hesitated. He was keeping back something, and Horrocks, suspecting it, raised a crutch and aimed a blow at Bryson's head. The man dodged, but in its downward sweep the ferruled end grazed his cheek.

"Tell the rest of it!" Horrocks screeched. "What about the tracks?"

Bryson recoiled, and his face betrayed the fear which the other was able to inspire in his most violent moods.

"I was going to tell you," he hastened to say. "Gridley said there were no girl tracks—only those of a man, and they didn't look as he thought King's footprints would look. They were made by broad heavy shoes with the soles badly worn. Gridley is a great man at reading trails, you know."

Strangely enough, Horrocks became suddenly silent as if he was thinking out a problem. When he spoke it was in a calmer tone than he had used at any time before.

"There was somebody besides Wallingford King's son and the traitor-cat hiding in the mill," he said. "The one who fired and hit Adam ran away with the car, and the other man and the girl are hiding around here still. Go in and call the lumber camp. Tell Gridley to send up a dozen men, and we'll run down the son of Wallingford King."

Zella touched the arm of her companion and whispered:

"You can see, Mr. King—Horrocks is not human! He can fathom anything. He was always that way."

"His brain certainly has a twist in it," King admitted.

At the same time he drew Zella away from the house, and keeping within the shelter of the darkest shadows, they managed to get to the big barn which was used as a garage. The racing car stood near the entrance to the barn with its front to the highway. Its position for making a quick start could not have been more favorable.

Bryson again went into the house in obedience to the order of Horrocks to call up the lumber camp. The cripple was on the doorstep, his piercing eyes looking straight at the car. And Zella had said he could see in the dark like a feline.

"We will seize the automobile and make our getaway," said King. "It will be better than to wait for them to swarm around here in a search for us. Come, quick!"

He led her around the rear of the barn so as to get at the machine from the side fartherst from Horrocks, mindful of his alleged ability to see in the dark. At no time of the night had the darkness been so impenetrable as it was then. The clouds had thickened, and there was the odor of rain in the atmosphere. A wind was rising, and that started the noises of creaking clapboards, the rattling of loose battens and shutters on the old buildings. Even the murmur of the forest, awakened by the breeze, made a soft confusion of sounds. These all helped King and Zella, for the slight sounds they were obliged to make were covered. They got into the machine un-

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detected, and King switched on the self-starting current.

"There may be sentinels posted a little way down the road," the girl whispered, as the car slid away from the building.

"If they don't get out of the road I will run over them!" laughed King.

At the same time he switched on the lights, and instantly the way ahead of them was slashed by the white glare. As if by magic the tall form of Adam seemed to spring into existence, standing near the middle of the road. He let out a yell of terror, and made a wild plunge to get out of the way. He stumbled and fell sprawling, and the best King could do was to clear his legs in passing by a scant half-foot. Then, as the big machine bowled down the straight stretch, a screech, such as it would not be believed any human voice could have uttered, came from the cripple. The door of the house was flung open, and Bryson ran out, joining his shouts to the clamor.

A moan of terror came from Zella, but King was silent while he gripped the steering gear, and the machine left the farm buildings out of sight. "That old road," he then exclaimed, as he slightly checked the onward rush. "Tell me where I am to make the turn."

"We are almost there," she answered. "To the right or the left?"

"The left. It really crosses this road, but the section on the right hasn't been used for a long time and is mostly grown up to bushes."

A moment later the car swung around the turn, and for some distance the spinning tires swished against the drooping branches of the untrimmed roadside trees. The car bounced over rocks and hummocks, for it had been many years since the grade had been touched by road-menders. King gradually slackened the speed.

"Now, about that bridge?" he asked.

"I can't judge how far we have come," Zella answered, "but I should say we must be getting near to the bridge."

"There seems to be quite a steep descent just ahead of us," said King, "and probably the river is at the bottom of that."

"Yes, yes!" Zella exclaimed. "I remember about it now."

At the beginning of the steep pitch King abruptly stopped the car and switched off the lights. The darkness around them was so impenetrable that it seemed as if they had been dropped into a pit. At the same time King whispered:

"See! There are lights at the bottom of the hill. I saw them just in time to turn off ours before they should swing into range and betray us."

"This proves that Horrocks has managed to cut off our flight in this direction, just as I feared," said Zella, hopelessly. "You know I have said he always——"

"Listen!" King interrupted.

As he spoke, his left hand, no longer engaged in guiding the car, fell with a reassuring clasp upon her arm. There was the whispering of the wind thru the pines, and at first she could hear nothing else. Then she caught the sound of a hammer driving a spike or large nail. Then other hammers joined in a rat-a-tat-tat which could not be mistaken. The hammers stopped, then began again, but were presently stopped by a cautious halloo. After that the pines had the silence again for their whisperings.

"It is at the bridge," breathed the girl. "It is likely that Horrocks has found a way to signal to some of his men to take away all that remained of the bridge so we could not cross it."

"They don't drive spikes and nails when they tear down a structure," said King. "It sounds more to me as if somebody was repairing the bridge."

"Why would Horrocks do that?"

"Horrocks may have nothing to do with it. Or, again perhaps," King laughed softly, "we are making only wild guesses."

"There is no limit to the resources of that man," Zella persisted. "You do not yet begin to know how invincible he is."

"There seems to be only one thing to do," said King, after another brief space of time given to listening. "Delay here only gives Horrocks and his men more time to get after us. We can't turn back, for there's hardly the shadow of a chance of our getting thru their lines at the lumber camp. We must go ahead."

Without switching on either the power or the lights the machine was permitted to coast down the slope. Its progress was almost silent, and it was brought to a stop within twenty yards of the bridge without its approach being detected. At that point the foliage sagging over the road almost wholly hid the lights which were seen more plainly from the top of the hill. Zella was almost holding her breath. "I will creep closer to the bridge and see what I can make out," King whispered, "if you're not afraid to stay alone."

"I'm afraid of Horrocks," she replied. "I never felt such fear before. It isn't of what he may do, in a definite way. It is a kind of nameless terror—can you understand?—different from the fear of being hurt or killed."

"It is of the man himself, and I understand," said King.

To walk upon a gravelly surface even with rubber soles without making any sound is a trick of which few are capable. Stealth is given to the feline among animals and to a few human beings who usually have other feline traits which make them dangerous. King had done more creeping about and listening in the course of the present adventure than he had attempted before in all his life.

"I would rather slam into the game and fight it out to a finish, win or lose," was his thought as he stole along under the drooping trees in his approach to the bridge.

The hammering had stopped, and he heard the voices of the workmen. He gained a position which enabled him to see them, with the structure which they were building, and which at first glance he did not make out the meaning of.

They had spiked together a framework resembling that of a bridge, but it was not in position to serve as a crossing of the river. Even the remains of the old bridge which Zella had said was nearly demolished by a freshet had been removed and the water flowed swiftly thru the gap in the roadway, chafing the rocky sides with an audible murmur. The workmen were grouped near their handiwork. The light to work by was furnished by four lanterns hung from overhanging branches of the trees which formed an arch over the road.

There were five of the workmen, and none of them was recognized by King. If they belonged to the Horrocks lumber-cutting crew it was certain that King had not seen any of them either at Gridley's camp or among his pursuers. Did they, then, King asked himself, have any connection with the Horrocks crowd?

"That's a question," he reflected, "that makes quite a difference to me. I didn't strike into this game with an idea of doing a general Sherlock Holmes business, and I don't care to get mixed into anything that has nothing to do with fraud that seems to be under way by the tenant of the King farm."

The men were talking in low voices, and there was only one of them who spoke with sufficient distinctness for the listener to make out what he was saying.

"It's a poor bluff at a drawbridge," this one was saying, "and I told you we weren't making it stout enough. A team might cross on it safely, but an auto truck, or even any kind of a heavy car will stand a good chance of smashing thru."

King could not catch the replies made to this speech, but a moment later the same speaker spoke again.

"We aren't bridge builders, nor even carpenters, and we have made a botch of the job. We were to have it ready before sunrise for the empty trucks to cross, and tomorrow night they are to return loaded with all the lumber they could carry. And they said Horrocks himself was to inspect the bridge before it was used. What will we do about it?"

Horrocks! The name twanged in the ears of King with telling significance, and in a moment he knew that this bridge was in truth a part of the criminal fabric woven by the cripple.

"Whichever way I turn," he thought, "I find Horrocks blocking the way. And Zella says he always wins in the end!"

In spite of himself, King felt as if there was good reason for the half-superstitious fear which the girl expressed by her belief in the invincible and uncanny powers of Horrocks. Yet, when his activities were reduced to a logical analysis, they were no more than the

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resourceful workings of a man who might have achieved similar triumphs in legitimate lines of business. It is a narrow line, after all, which divides the captains of industry from the past masters of crime. King began to regard Horrocks as a genius in malevolence.

The words of the bridge builder carried a sufficient explanation of the object of the work they were doing.

This road was the shortest way to the Canadian boundary. Two or three miles beyond the river was the line between the State of Maine and the Province of Quebec. And the remarks of the workman indicated that Horrocks was expecting auto trucks to haul the lumber stolen from the King lot to the other side of that line. "So this works into the case which I was sent up here to clear up," was King's conclusion.

The conference among the laborers ended abruptly, and King saw them swing the bridge across the river. The span was barely twenty feet, with the water running swift and deep underneath. It was too dark for King to make out all the details of the mechanism, but he could see that it was operated by means of a windlass and cable which it took the entire crew to handle. While the abutments of the original bridge were intact, and probably they were strong enough for any strain that was likely to come upon them, the drawbridge itself—if that were the proper name for it—did not look safe for a heavily loaded truck. It even seemed rather hazardous to venture upon the shaky structure with the racing car which King was driving.

He stole back to the car, leaving the workmen in the act of crossing the drawbridge, taking their tools with them. The sounds of their hammers were resumed as they spiked down the unsecured planks of the flooring.

King briefly and in a whisper told Zella what he had discovered. "So you see," he concluded, "that we can go no further in this direction, at least with the car, without taking a heavy chance of smashing that bridge and making a plunge, machine and all, into the river."

"And if we turn back," whispered Zella, "we will be sure to be stopped by Horrocks' men."

"We must go ahead," said King. "They are likely at any moment to draw the bridge in again, and then we would be blocked. I wish I was sure whether or not these men have been ordered to be on the lookout for us. If they haven't——"

Zella interrupted by a warning gesture. "Listen!" she exclaimed. "I hear galloping horses. Some of Horrocks' men are close on our trail!"

There could be no mistaking the sounds.

"Yes," said King, "they're after us, so here goes for the bridge." And he snapped on the power and started the car.

This remarkable story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

Painful Silence.

"I think that butting in is a practice that should be encouraged," remarked the star boarder as he passed the butter to the pretty school teacher. "I hear a lot of people knocking the butter-in all the time, and it has caused me to hold my peace sometimes at enormous cost.

"Now, the other day I heard two men on the car talking to each other about the little button which I wear upon my lapel, the colors of France. Those two men argued that it was German. And I had to sit there dumb and listen because I was afraid to butt into their conversation. And one of them told about being at a picture show where he had seen Lord Kitchener defeat Napoleon.

"I simply got off the car. I couldn't stand it a moment longer. They talked so loud that I had to hear it, and at the same time I was not privileged to set them right.

"And when people talk about the war so that I can't hear what they say I want to push up a little closer, right in between the two talkers, if necessary, to hear what they are saying. But I can't do it because of the unpopularity of butting in.

FRECKLES

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There's no longer the slightest need of feeling ashamed of your freckles, as the prescription othine—double strength—is guaranteed to remove these homely spots.

Simply get an ounce of othine—double strength—from your druggist, and apply a little of it night and morning and you should soon see that even the worst freckles have begun to disappear, while the lighter ones have vanished entirely. It is seldom that more than one ounce is needed to completely clear the skin and gain a beautiful clear complexion.

Be sure to ask for the double strength othine, as this is sold under guarantee of money back if it fails to remove freckles.

"Some people do, of course. A small boy will shove right up and enjoy the conversation open-eared and open-mouthed. It is a great privilege."

"I confess that I, too, would like to 'butt in,' as you call it, sometimes," said the teacher. "Once I went to a baseball game and my brother was playing, and when he went up to the bat two men started talking about him. One said he looked as if he ought to be able to hit it a mile, and the other said he guessed not—that he was afraid to stand up to the plate.

"I just wanted to say: 'You are mistaken. He isn't afraid of anything. He'll hit the ball a mile and more than that.'

"My brother did hit the ball, too, and got on the base, and then one of the men said that he knew the fellow—that his name was Schmidt, and that he worked in a butcher shop.

"If I had been with any one but Uncle Budger I would have tapped that young man on the back and put him right. But with Uncle Budger there such an act was impossible."

"It is a wonder your Uncle Budger didn't put him right."

"If I had said anything he would. He would have put him right with great enthusiasm—too much, in fact. He would have hooked his cane around the fellow's neck and said: 'Young man, you're a liar. That boy's name is Cobb and he never was in a butcher shop in his life.'"

"And that would have been the entirely proper thing to do," answered the star boarder.

Too Sensitive.

"How many plants have died on your hands since your wife went away and left you in charge of them?" asked Dubster of his friend Vouce.

"Nine," answered Vouce, in a melancholy voice. "But if I can only hang to this elephant's ears plant the loss of the others perhaps will be forgiven. It looks mighty doubtful now. I can't remember whether that plant should be watered often or seldom. But I know I am not handling it right. One day half of it fell off. A fellow told me the pot was too small for it, so I put it into a bigger pot and started to water it. Hanged if I'm not raising a new right ear where the old one fell out. But the new ear is turned the wrong way."

"That's nothing," said Dubster. "You don't know what trouble is. I broke my wife's magnolia tree. The last thing my wife did before she went away was to look at the magnolia tree with tender eyes as tho she hated to leave it, and she ministered to it in some occult fashion, but I didn't know just what she did.

"Anyway, I started doing the wrong things to that magnolia tree. I shocked its tender nerves somehow. I didn't know whether it liked soapsuds in the water or whether soapsuds would kill it. I didn't know whether it ought to be trimmed and have the dirt dug up around it or not. It was a very sensitive thing, too sensitive in my hands. But suddenly I had an inspiration.

"Seeing it looking sick and sad, I made up my mind to do something desperate. I got the spade and the tweezers and a spraying apparatus and started after it. I thought I would try a little of everything and perhaps I could tell by the way the tree deported itself whether I was on the right trail or not.

"As soon as I came near where the tree was it gave a croaking sound and began to fall to pieces. Three limbs broke off and fell, and I hadn't even touched it yet!"

"Yes," counseled Vouce, "the magnolia is very sensitive, and you must be very careful with it."

"Oh, I don't know," said Dubster. "I nailed the branches back on and put grafting wax on them and amputated around, and now I think I must have its goat. It hasn't pulled any more of that sensitive nonsense on me. It is behaving nicely and thriving better than ever before.

"You take that elephant's ears plant of your wife's and kick it around a little bit rough, and it will quit its foolishness and be better than ever before by the time your wife gets home."

Proposal Formulas.

"My dear uncle," said the well-known clubman's nephew, "I'd like your expert advice concerning something that is of vital importance to me. I know that you've had a great deal of experience in certain affairs regarding which I seek knowledge. I want to know how to propose marriage to the most beautiful girl whom the birds ever sang to."

"So that's it, is it?" returned the elderly clubman. "Therein lies the reason why you have been going around for the past month with a faraway look in your orbs and showing all the symptoms of a sentimental boob. Who told you that she was the most beautiful girl in the world? She may be one of the most beautiful, but she has no monopoly of beauty, by any means. There exists a young woman to whom I am——"

"So you're engaged, uncle? Congratulations! I'm very glad of it. Pardon me for trying to rob her of her pre-eminence in pulchritude. Let us agree that your girl and mine are the two most beautiful maidens that ever graced this sphere. But, in the meantime, I must know how to propose. I've read volumes on the subject and no two writers agree on the same method. One will take Romeo for a working model. Another makes his proposals sound as cold as the expounding of a geometrical problem."

"There is no set rule, my boy," said the well-known clubman. "All the books on the subject are made to sell to unsophisticated lovers like yourself. I know, because I bought them all. I used to know how every hero in history proposed, from King Arthur's time to the present day. Yet, when the moment came for me to ask the most beautiful girl—pardon me, I mean one of the two most beautiful girls—to be mine forever, I hemmed and hawed until she noticed my peculiar behavior and asked me if I was feeling well. I became desperate then and proposed blindly.

"'Say, Majorie,' I exploded, 'think we can find time to get married next June?' That elegant and dignified speech brought the sweetest 'yes' I ever heard.

"My advice to a young man is this: Use a plain and simple but effective proposal. Select a few words with a 'punch' to them. If I had recited a long-winded prolog about 'years filled with love's tender passion,' 'strolling amidst Elysian fields with Eros at our side,' 'soaring wing to wing thru an eternity of connubial bliss,' she might have thought I was a nut comedian."

"How would this do for me, uncle? 'Say, Inez, think we can find time to get married next June?'"

"That's my original stuff, my boy; but you have my full permission to use it. I can guarantee its effectiveness, and I'll bet you a dining-room set to a rug for the back hall that Inez will chirp 'yes' when you spring it."

Before and After.

"James, dear, will you bring me up a scuttle of coal from the cellar?" said a busy wife.

"That's just the way with you," said James, with a frown as he put down his book and rose from the armchair.

"Just the way with me?"

"Yes!" he snapped. "As soon as you see me enjoying myself, you have something or other for me to do. Didn't you see I was absorbed in my reading?"

"Well, dear, I will do it myself."

"Yes, and tell everybody—your mother especially—that you have to carry your own coal up from the cellar. No, I'll do it. Let me mark my place."

So he marked the place in the book at which he had ceased reading, and when he went down to the cellar, grumbling all the way, she picked up the volume and found that it was a love story, and that the passage he had been absorbed in was as follows:

"My darling, when you are my wife I will shield and protect you from every care; the winds of heaven shall not visit your face too roughly, those pretty hands shall never be soiled by menial tasks, your wish shall be my law, your happiness——"

Just then he reappeared, and, dropping the scuttle upon the floor, said:

"There's your coal! Give me my book."

A Blaze of Light.

"What do you city people want with so much illumination?" asked the man from the country town. "This blaze of light is the worst thing you could have, but growing towns all imitate you in this respect. Too much illumination is the ruin of every growing town.

"In our town they have cut down all the trees so as to give their great white lights plenty of chance to dispel all shadows. They turn night into day, which is a very bad thing. There was a time when the chickens in our town enjoyed a good night's rest and all was peaceful and quiet. But now, darn it, the hens never get a rest! They go around scratching and laying all night. Burning the candle at both ends has been the ruin of lots of enterprising chickens, who refuse to go to bed by day.

"The grass in the lawns, being prodded by the constant light, gets no rest, either. Young blades when they get to dissipating that way grow past all endurance. A fellow hates to mow the lawn every morning besides shaving. But these lights blazing away all night the grass has to grow and it needs cutting every morning.

"And the beans in the garden! They grow so high that by the time they are ripe, and ready for the pan nobody can reach them without a stepladder. Everybody can't afford to own a stepladder and they all can't borrow the same stepladder at the same time, so lots of people never get their bean crop harvested until it is too late in the season to enjoy it.

"There was a time when the young men lined up at the church doors every Sunday evening to catch the girls as they came out and take them home. But that can't be done in a glare of light like the noonday sun. Bright lights and no shadowy, dark places have put an end to all sparking in many burgs that were once healthy and strong.

"They've put the whole town on the blink with so much glare!"

Unsuccessful Ruse.

A certain dealer had a lot of cheese which was anything but good, and, tired of seeing it about, told the assistant when he closed up the shop to leave one of the cheeses at the door for some one to walk off with. Thomas occasionally crept to a window to see operations, and at length went to his master, grinning all over his face, saying the cheese was gone.

"Leave another out tomorrow night," was the master's order, which was obeyed by the shopman, who, after a few peeps next evening, walked to his master in the counting-house, scratching his head and looking as tho some great disappointment had befallen him.

"Is it gone?" asked the dealer.

"No, sir; that other 'un has walked back!"

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REGRETS.

I might have praised him yesterday,
  But now he cannot hear,
And I that had no word to say
  Send roses to his bier.

Time was I might have cheered his life,
  When warm in him was breath,
But I that failed him in the strife
  Now beautify his death.

Oh, how much longer must I live
  Before I cease to wait
The roses of my love to give
  Until it is too late?

What the Doctor Said.

"I'm getting awfully tired of this," Wilkinson declared, as the door closed behind the departing physician. "I don't believe he knows what he's doing. The idea of any doctor's keeping a man like me tied up at home like this when I've got to get downtown. Any decent doctor would know I was able to go to the office. You yourself know perfectly that I am entirely well now."

"Yes," said Mrs. Wilkinson, suppressing a sigh. "I guess you are. The doctor——"

"Oh, I know, you women think that a doctor is something like a saint or a miracle worker. It positively makes a sensible man tired to see how a woman admires a professional man. That M. D. doesn't know his business. He's changed the medicine three times in a week."

"I know it, but he said——"

"Oh, yes; he said it was because I was getting better, but am I?" he asked solemnly. "Do you see any improvement in me?"

"Some ways."

"I mean in health, of course. No woman ever thought her husband improved any other way. But you know perfectly well that I'm an awful sick man. He shows that by the way he hustles off to his other cases. He can't bear to look me in the face. And then he tells me I've had a light touch of grip, just to keep me from being frightened. They'll tell you anything, those doctors."

"This morning he told me——"

"Don't talk to me about it. If he told you anything serious I am in no condition to hear it. I ought to be able to go to the office, but if I'm not it's because that infernal grip has left me with something. I haven't any idea what, but it may be peritonitis or even pneumonia. When I breathe deeply I can hear things rattle."

"Oh, I'm sure you're all right," Mrs. Wilkinson said soothingly. "The doctor said——"

"Of course, you are in the conspiracy, too," Wilkinson growled. "A man's wife will turn against him if the doctor advises her to. I looked it up in the encyclopedia and it gives a whole column of things that can be left by even a light attack of grip. If I had a doctor that understood me it might save my life. I'll bet there's time yet. If you take even serious things early you can cure them, they say. What doctor do you think we could call in?"

"There are lots of them, of course, but wouldn't it hurt our doctor's feelings?"

"There you are!" Wilkinson said tragically. "A woman and her family physician. I suppose if that medico told you to give me a dip in the lake you'd push me in, grip and all. I don't think wives ever believe their husbands are sick, no matter what they say."

"Poor man!"

"I think I shall go back to bed," Wilkinson went on sadly, "and have you send for a specialist."

"All right," Mrs. Wilkinson agreed. "What kind of a specialist?"

"How can I tell?" said Wilkinson. "A man never knows what's the matter with him."

"Perhaps you're just finding it dull at home with nothing to do."

"Dull at home?" repeated Wilkinson. "Why, I haven't got the strength of an infant. I'm a sick man. I'll be grateful if you'll send for a specialist of any kind."

"All right, I will," Mrs. Wilkinson agreed, "tho it will cost a great deal, and it seems a pity after what the doctor said."

"Well, what did he say? You might as well tell me."

"Nothing much, except that you are well now and can go down to the office today if you like."

* * *

House Cleaning.

"Why do you amble around like a centenarian?" asked the citizen in spats.

"House cleaning. Ouch!" cried the man in the cloth hat, holding his sides. "House cleaning did it. We have been house cleaning this week, and the wreck you behold before you is the result."

"Ah, I see. You fell out of the third-story window while cleaning it?"

"Nope. Just plain house cleaning, which is the bane of married life and the thing that will eventually kill off our best citizens. Last week I was a young, healthy animal, enjoying life and with not a worry in the world. Today I am full of aches and pains and no one would give 10 cents on the dollar for me.

"Last Monday morning while at coffee and rolls my wife broke the news to me. 'Henry,' she said, 'I start house cleaning this morning and I'd like to have you stay home and assist me a little.' What could I do? I was feeling fine and thought it would be fun to roll up my sleeves and tackle the job. I put on an old suit and asked her to show me what was to be done. She said the piano would have to be moved from the front parlor to the kitchen. I began to whistle and clinched with the instrument.

"Did you ever try to shove and guide a piano along the length of an eight-room flat? I was ten minutes bucking it with my shoulder before it began to budge. Then it gave a lurch sideways. I got the little casters under it all facing the same way after a while and began to ram it again. It moved along slowly but surely for six feet, then—bing! It hit the door jamb leading to the dining-room. I fell back from the recoil, and I think it was there that I dislocated my left shoulder.

"My hip was sprung out of place trying to round the bend of the library. Every three or four feet one of my ribs would snap audibly. I got the instrument out in the kitchen by 12:30 and then went right to bed, after sending out for a quart of arnica and some sedatives. And, would you believe it, my wife didn't thank me a bit. She said I was as clumsy as a pachyderm and showed gouges out of the woodwork and broken bric-a-brac to prove it."

"I sincerely sympathize with you," said the citizen in spats. "I was on the house cleaning job myself once—and only once. I had to move a piano, too, but I did it with a block and tackle and called in some of the neighbors' kids to help me. I pretended to my wife that I didn't know the first thing about house cleaning. Everything she set me to do I made a botch of—intentionally. I had to take the dishes from the pantry shelves. Every time she was close at hand I'd drop a dish on the floor. That went right to her heart, of course, and she ordered me out of the house till the cleaning was done. My scheme worked fine."

"I hope my wife thinks the same way," said the man in the cloth hat. "I may regain my strength and be able to push a piano again, but the next time I'll suggest a quartet of husky piano movers. Piano moving is an art. And, besides, at house cleaning time a man's place is away from the house. As far away as possible."

* * *

A Costly Fad.

"Didn't I see three wrecked automobiles being towed into your garage this morning?" asked the woman who had just dropped in. "I called my husband to the window to see them, but he couldn't offer any explanation. When I saw the first one I thought it was your own car and that your husband must have been in a terrible mishap. When I saw the others I didn't know what to think, so I came over to find out and put my mind at ease."

"I suspected as much," exclaimed the woman in the mob cap. "I suppose every neighbor for blocks around had his or her head out the window wondering what my husband was up to with those automobile remnants. I'll tell you. He's an auction fan."

"I never heard of the thing!"

"Well, my husband is one. He can't resist attending an auction if it's within a hundred miles of him. Last week he heard that there was to be an auction of damaged automobiles. A garage had burned down some place and several machines were incinerated and buried under the falling walls. He went out there and bid in on the three cars they dug out of the ruins. He's got them stored in our garage now and we've got to rent space elsewhere for our own car. In a short time he'll realize that he bought a white elephant—or three of them. And then he'll call in a junkman and sell them at 100 per cent loss.

"To be afflicted with the auction mania is terrible. A few years ago he had a craze for period furniture. He wouldn't bring anything home that wasn't a thousand years old—more or less. At least, that's what the auctioneer would tell him. He was the highest bidder on a lot of battered, weather-beaten furniture that was supposed to have belonged to the Louies.

"We set them in the parlor and our company began to think we had pawned our original stuff and had to buy second hand furniture. I had to explain the whole situation every time any one called.

"He bought a suit of armor one time that was supposed to have been worn in battle by a man named Charlie Main. We had it stuck up in a prominent place until a theatrical friend remarked that he used to wear that armor when he suped years ago in a play that was known as 'The King's Ransom.'

"He bought Cleopatra's writing desk, with Marc Antony's initials cut in it. A short time later he heard of the factory in Maine where they make the desks in gross lots. He was ready to buy the alleged dory in which Washington crossed the Delaware until a kind friend showed him that the boat wasn't more than forty-five years old."

"Aren't you afraid the neighbors, seeing that he's such a gatherer of old objects, will think that he took you for an antique?"

"Not in the least. But I know some women who would be justified in that fear."

At Last.

Hah! A wild shout and a rush of men! There had been an accident; Patrick Milligan, one of the gang of mine shaft sinkers, had fallen down—down.

At first his mates thought it was all up with Pat, but a faint yell told them otherwise. Peering down the shaft, they saw Pat lying precariously on a beam about a third of the way down. And from this place he directed his own rescue.

But just as they were lowering ropes Pat slipped down another twenty feet. So they patiently began again, this time feeling sure of success. The rope was almost in his hand when, in his excitement, he lurched forward and crashed away into the darkness below.

White of face, the foreman leaned over the shaft.

"Pat!" he shouted. "I say, Pat!"

From the unseen depths came a faint reply of "Hurroo!"

"Are ye hurt, Pat?"

"I am not!"

"Where are ye, man?"

"Phwat d'you say?"

"Where are you?"

"Where am I? Glory be to Moses, I'm on the bottom at last!"

How Nuxated Iron Helped Me To Whip Frank Moran

Jess Willard Tells Secret of His Easy Victory. Also reveals hitherto untold secret of his great triumph over Jack Johnson; Says

IRON IS GREATEST OF ALL STRENGTH BUILDERS

Ordinary Nuxated Iron will often increase the strength and endurance of delicate, nervous folks 200 per cent. in two weeks time.

I consider that plenty of iron in my blood is the secret of my great strength, power and endurance.

Jess Willard

SPECIAL NOTE.—Dr. E. Sauer, a well known physician who has studied widely in both this country and Europe, has been specially employed to make a thorough investigation into the real secret of the great strength, power and endurance of Jess Willard, and the marvelous value of nuxated iron as a strength builder.

NEW YORK.—Upon being interviewed at his apartment in the Colonial Hotel, Mr. Willard said: "Yes, I have a chemist with me to study the value of different foods and products as to their power to produce great strength and endurance, both of which are so necessary in the prize ring. On his recommendation I have often taken nuxated iron and I have particularly advocated the free use of iron by all those who wish to obtain great physical and mental power. Without it I am sure that I should never have been able to whip Jack Johnson so completely and easily as I did, and while training for my bout with Frank Moran, I regularly took nuxated iron, and I am certain that it was a most important factor in my winning so easily." Continuing Dr. Sauer said, "Mr. Willard's case is only one of hundreds which I could cite from my own personal experience which proves conclusively the astonishing power of nuxated iron to restore strength and vitality even in most complicated chronic conditions."

Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old, and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret he said was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. At 30 he was in bad health; at 46 careworn and nearly all in. Now at 50 a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. As I have said a hundred times over, iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple nuxated iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved, who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver and heart trouble, etc. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous run-down people who were ailing all the while, double their strength and endurance and entirely get rid of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless.

Many an athlete or prize fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.—E. Sauer, M. D.

NOTE.—Nuxated Iron, recommended above by Dr. Sauer is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy, in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent. or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all druggists.

Bad Time of the Year.

"Hasn't Mr. Fanleigh proposed yet, daughter?"

"No, mamma; I can't get him to talk about anything but baseball."

News to Him.

Parson—"I was glad to see you at prayer meeting last night, brother."

Village Souse—"Was that where I was? Well, I be jiggered!"

Uncle Eben's Advice.

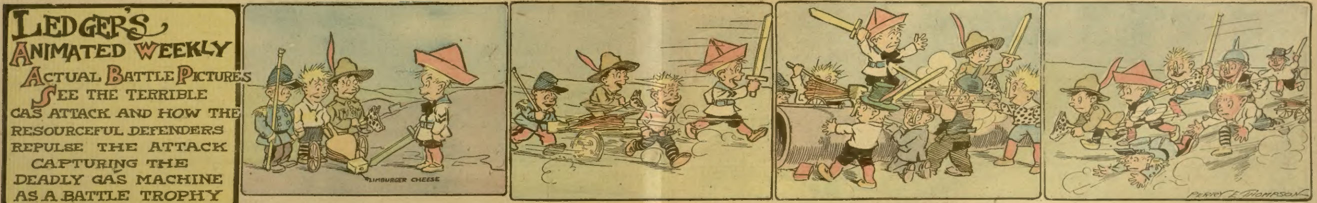
"It's better to agree wif a man as much as yo kin," said Uncle Eben. "It makes him feel good-natured, an' you don't have to listen to so much talk."

The Difficulty.

"Do you think the nations are really going to get a decision at Verdun?"

"Don't know; too many outsiders umpiring the game."

Repulse of the Limburger Battle

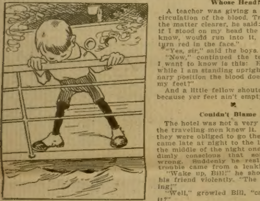


General Tommy—"Men, the other day we licked the enemy to a frazzle with our limburger gas machine! Today we take the offensive and attack the enemy in his own trenches!

"Hoope-e! Hurray! We're off! We'll capture the whole works by storm! Major Smithy, do your duty with the gas! Charge!

"Go to 'em, my brave lads! Give 'em the limburger good and plenty! Oh, rats, they're wearing gas masks and can't smell! Retreat! Fall back! All is lost!

"I gotta double up with youse on the war horse, adjutant, or I'll never get back to our trenches! Doggone the feller that invented clothespins, anyway!"



The boy upon the burning deck
Expressed himself with vim,
"If I get out of this, by heck!
You bet I'll learn to swim!"

*

The Voice of Conscience.

In spite of scoldings, Helen persisted in running away from home. One day, after a longer absence than usual, her mother asked, "Helen, dear, does not your conscience trouble you when you are running away from mother?" explaining that her conscience was a little voice speaking within. Helen answered:

"Oh, yes, mamma; that little voice is always saying: 'Run faster, faster, Helen; your mother is after you!'"

*

Correct Dress for Men.

Youthful Officer—"You really must send my new breeches today. I'm off to France tomorrow, and I believe my regiment has a battle on for the week-end."

Whose Head?

A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of the blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, he said: "Now, boys, if I stood on my head the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I should turn red in the face."

"Yes, sir," said the boys.

"Now," continued the teacher, "what I want to know is this: How is it that while I am standing upright in the ordinary position the blood doesn't rush into my feet?"

And a little fellow shouted: "Why, sir, because yer feet ain't empty."

*

Couldn't Blame It.

The hotel was not a very good one and the traveling men knew it. Nevertheless they were obliged to go there when they came late at night to the little town. In the middle of the night one of them was dimly conscious that something was wrong. Suddenly he realized that the trouble came from a leaking gas jet.

"Wake up, Bill!" he shouted, shaking his friend violently. "The gas is escaping!"

"Well," growled Bill, "can you blame it?"

*

"Push and Go."

A Liverpool cotton broker, choosing a new office boy, rang up another firm to inquire about the character of one of the applicants.

"Well," said the head clerk, who answered the telephone, "he's one of these 'push and go' boys."

"Good!" said the cotton broker, eagerly. "Smart and efficient, and all that, eh?"

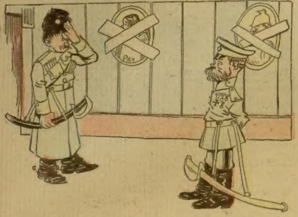
"Not at all," came the unexpected reply; "what I mean is that he only goes when you push him."

*

The Doctrine of Chance.

He—"Was your father very angry when you told him of our engagement?"

She—"Not particularly. He said he had been rather fortunate in the stock market of late, and figured it was about time for his luck to turn."



The Czar's Orderly—"His Majesty the Kaiser has sent the dove of peace to Your Majesty."

The Czar—"All right! Have it roasted—I'll eat it for dinner!"

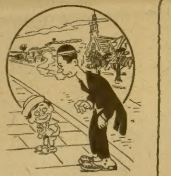
ADAM AND EVE.

What's a woman? Ask a man,
What d'you fancy he will say?
"Airs and graces, frills and laces,
Never knows what she wants each day!"
Why, then, gossip, tell me true,
Why you woo her—as you do.

Ask a woman: "What's a man?"
What d'you fancy she will say?
"Swagg'ring, swearing, overbearing,
Always wanting to have his way!"
Say, then, gossip, if you can,
Why you wed him?—horrid man!

Gentle sir and sweetest madam,
Would you know the reason true
Why today you scorn each other
And tomorrow bill and coo?
Ask your parents, Eve and Adam.
They can tell—and so can you!

*



Gent—"So the police made you send your chickens away? Why?"

Kid—"Because the neighbors were using foul language."

*

That Settled It.

At the amateur operatic performance of "The Mistletoe Bough"—in which, as you remember, the heroine hides in a cedar chest and is smothered to death—the lady who played this part was, vocally, a terrible fiasco. Nevertheless, they struggled along until the scene where she climbed into the box—a real "property" kindly lent for the occasion by Jones Smith, president of the local safe deposit company. The lid snapped down with a click that was only too realistic.

A frightened stage manager rushed out to where the owner of the box sat and whispered frantically:

"Gimme the key! The lid of your blooming box has sprung locked."

"Is that woman going to sing any more?"

"Sure, she comes in as a ghost in the next act and sings two songs."

"That settles it," muttered old Jones Smith. "She can just stay there."

*

Taken at His Word.

Sarcastic Father—"Julia, that young man Smiley has been here three nights in succession, and it has been nearly midnight when he left. Hadn't you better invite him to bring his trunk and make his home with us?"

Innocent Daughter—"Oh, papa, may I? It is just what he wanted, but he was too bashful to ask you. He'll be delighted when I tell him this evening."

Wasn't Interested in Chautauquas.

This story was told by Admiral Dewey of the United States Navy.

One afternoon the business agent for a Chautauqua went to a prosperous town to see some of the natives with regard to booking a performance and finally landed in the office of Jones.

"Yes, I am Mr. Jones," said the occupant. "What can I do for you?"

"I called to see you about a Chautauqua," returned the visitor.

"Nothing doing," curtly interrupted Jones. "My wife and I have already decided on a car of another make."

*

Society Note.

Mrs. Stubbins—"Do you like codfish balls, Mr. Fox?"

The New Lodger—"I don't know, Mrs. Stubbins. I never attended any."

Misfortune.

"Smith lost his head at a critical moment."

"Then what happened?"

"His department chief cut it off."

*

A Highbrow.

"My husband is so literary!" exclaimed Mrs. Nurich.

"Really?"

"Yes; he's always calling up his broker to get quotations."

The Wisdom of Age.

"Ma," remonstrated Bobby, "when I was at grandma's she used to let me have two pieces of cake."

"Well, she ought not to have done so, Bobby," said his mother. "I think two pieces of cake are too much for little boys. The older you grow, the more wisdom you will gain."

Bobby was silenced, but only for a moment.

"Well, ma," he said, "grandma is a good deal older than you are."

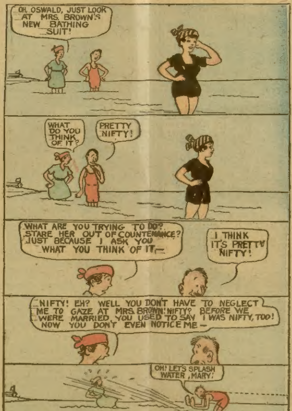
*

Examining the Doctors.

"Ah, squire," saluted the village bore, "What are you doing for your rheumatism now?"

"Examining the doctors one after another," snarled the old codger, "to see how much they don't know!"—Judge.

BEFORE AND AFTER


OH, OSWALD, JUST LOOK AT MRS. BROWN'S NEW BATHING SUIT!
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT?
PRETTY NIFTY!
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO? STARE HER OUT OF COUNTENANCE? JUST BECAUSE I ASK YOU WHAT YOU THINK OF IT—
I THINK IT'S PRETTY NIFTY!
NIFTY! EH? WELL YOU DON'T HAVE TO NEGLECT ME TO GAZE AT MRS. BROWN! NIFTY? BEFORE WE WERE MARRIED YOU USED TO SAY I WAS NIFTY, TOO! NOW YOU DON'T EVEN NOTICE ME—
OH! LET'S SPLASH WATER, MARY!

THE MOTORIST'S LOVE SONG.

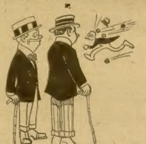
Oh, come, my love, and speed with me,
In my new car of nth H. P.,
And pass the flying hours
In burning up the dusty roads,
By merry mile-a-minute modes—
Much better than love's bowers.

A bliss which cooing will not cloy
Is when we cling in ride of joy
That every minute faces
A turning turtle, or careen,
Unto the plunging-mad machine
That's hitting the high places.

Come, let us flash without a stop
Past signal of the traffic cop.
His order just defying,
And feel, with the speed maniac's thrill,
The sound of a pursuing still
By motorcycle flying.

And we will laugh as on we go,
Pedestrians scurrying to and fro,
With five or six bowled over;
And hear their cries of frantic rage,
The while a whirlwind scene we stage—
That's where true bliss doth hover!

*



"Is that a second-story man the suburbanites are pelting with stale tomatoes?"

"No, that is the chap who draws the vegetable pictures you see in the seed catalog."

*

She Didn't Mind.

The mother of a family that had just moved to a small Oklahoma town was being sympathized with by a visitor because of the distance of the house from the creek which furnished the water for household purposes.

"It must be quite a tax upon your strength to carry water for your large family," her visitor suggested.

"Oh, I don't mind," was the cheerful reply. "Besides, I gave 'em all a good wash before we left Texas."

*

What Could a Poor Boy Do?

A woman coming down the garden walk was horrified at seeing her son standing on his head against the garden wall.

"Johnnie, you wretch," she cried, "what are you doing now?"

"Standing on my head," replied Johnnie. "Didn't you tell me to play at something that wouldn't wear my shoes out?"

*

What She Thought.

"Did the burglars upset your house much?"

"Terribly. When I entered and saw everything upside down my first thought was that Jim had come home unexpectedly and changed his clothes."

A Long Story.

"May I ask the cause of all this excitement?" asked the stranger in the little village.

"Certainly," replied the countryman. "We're celebrating the birthday of the oldest inhabitant. She's a hundred and one today."

"Indeed! And may I ask who is that little man, with the dreadfully sad countenance, walking by the old-lady's side?"

"Oh, that's the old lady's son-in-law, sir. He's been keeping up the payments on her life-insurance policy for the last thirty years!"

*

What Was Necessary.

"This latter day or new morality is too lax for me," quoth Jerome S. McWade, the Duluth millionaire. He continued:

"This new morality, which seems in its tolerance rather to encourage than to oppose wickedness, reminds me of a lad in my Sunday school class.

"'Now, Tommy,' I said to this lad, one Sunday afternoon, 'now, Tommy, what must we do before our sins can be forgiven?'

"'We must sin,' Tommy replied."

*

She Quit Worrying.

The conscientious girl worried so much over having paid for two eggs with bad money that soon the unconscientious girl also developed a conscience.

"It really is too bad that you cheated the poor man," she said the next time they met. "I think I feel almost as bad about it as you do."

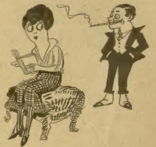
"Oh, don't worry," said the conscientious girl. "I am glad of it now. Both the eggs were bad."

*

Well Mated.

"Are they well mated?"

"Perfectly. He likes to make money and she likes to spend it."



Wifey—"Here is an article on 'How to Avoid War.'"

Hubby—"What does it say—remain single?"

*

The Irrepressible Donkey.

Two girl friends met in the street and stopped to shake hands.

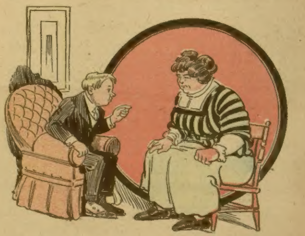
"So glad to see you, Grace," said the tailormade Alice. "Was just on my way to ask you, as my oldest friend, to be one of my bridesmaids."

"Bridesmaids! How lovely! I did not know you were engaged," replied Grace.

"It's sudden, very sudden; but he's awfully in love, and is just too lovely to live. Will you act?"

"Act? Of course. I'll be charmed. But," moving forward and speaking in an undertone, "do come round the corner and tell me all about it. Here comes that idiotic, irrepressible donkey, Jim Berton. He's grinning as tho he meant to stop, and I don't care to be seen talking to him."

"Jim Berton! He's the man I'm going to marry!"



Percival—"Now, mamma, if Bessie asks you for my hand tonight, no rough work, remember! If you throw her down the front steps, I shall leave the house myself!"

The Poppy Girl

Or, Daring the Bar Sinister

By Carroll K. Michener

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CHAPTER XIX.

THEY gave me Azelie's farewell note when I was strong enough to read it. That was many days after the night excursion in pursuit of the opium fleet. My wound that had seemed so trivial had not healed properly. There had been fever and delirium—perhaps even the near approach of Death, altho the nurse would not tell me that.

I let the soft Hawaiian breeze, coming thru the bamboo screens of the hospital lanai, steal over me for a long time, holding that note in fever-thinned fingers, before opening it. I felt what it contained, and I was right. It was a simple, final farewell. The words of the message I have completely forgotten, but they were in themselves insignificant. They told nothing of the real message that the note brought me—namely that Azelie loved me, and was leaving me in proof of it. Yes, there is one sentence I remember—I could not well forget that: "You will not find me—but if you should try to—well, have you heard of Pele, the volcano goddess, whose fiery heart welcomes women who have no other escape from life?"

Still I don't think I despaired. I had one solace, at least, in the consciousness that there no longer was any doubt of my own feeling. I was wholly hers—no barrier mattered to me now. I felt a sort of sacred defiance of the world, and at the same time a sort of tragic content that tho I had lost her in substance I had gained her in fact. She was mine—must be mine—forever, tho I should be permitted to look upon her face no more.

I don't think I realized until long after that the flowers I found on my table [illegible] were hers. Most often they were poppies—not the deathly white poppies under whose seeming purity lurks the great lethal curse of the East, but warm, blood-red poppies telling of bright gardens and sunlit days. They embodied the spiritual presence of Azelie that seemed to be everywhere about me.

The convalescence was slow, and the days in the sun along the beach were uneventful. I seemed to have forgotten the world and would not let it touch me. A great pile of unopened letters appealed to me, but I denied their claims. I wanted to be alone with the sun and the sea and memories of the vanished [illegible] I shut out even Malachart, who [illegible] tell me of the arrest of Jepson, the purser, and of his confession, implicating two other officers in the same transportation company. But I was no longer interested in opium, or smuggling, or the writing of magazine articles on one or the other—or anything.

• • •

I don't know that I was surprised when Mokuhana came to me, as on that one other occasion—in a previous existence, it seemed to me—and led the way mysteriously thru devious hill paths above the town. In the shadow of a great tree, as on that other occasion, sat Azelie. She greeted me shyly and with a certain purposeful reserve. I seemed to be in the midst of a memory, re-embodied into fact, for we went on and up, resolutely, to that strange volcanic chamber daringly pre-empted as a place of death.

I think I was too much dazed to ask for a reason—or too absurdly content to care for one.

"You are not curious?" Azelie inquired, searching my eyes, as we paused to rest before entering the gloomy cavern.

I shook my head.

"But there are proofs to be found here in this cave—about me."

"They do not interest me," I declared, with such a manifest sincerity that a [illegible]tain troubled look in her eyes vanished before an elation she could not conceal.

I remembered suddenly the note of farewell and pulled it forth, smiling to [illegible]nk of the unexpected contradiction. [illegible] took it, flushed a little, and then [illegible]an to tear it into tiny bits that [illegible] down into a white cluster at [illegible].

"That was before Mokuhana told me the secret," she explained. "Come—he is waiting for us."

Catching up one of the kukui nuts the old man had persisted in bringing in lieu of lanterns, as on the previous trip, she [illegible]s the narrow inlet of the [illegible], and went rapidly to the [illegible] stood the strange pair of urns. The shrunken, dead wreaths of flowers that had been placed there on our previous visit rustled dustily under Mokuhana's hands as he removed from one of the urns the rotten thongs that held in place a leather covering stretched over the top.

Azelie stood close to me, grasping my wounded arm tenderly in both her hands, as the old man brought forth a shapeless bundle. He held it up to me, in the sputtering bluish-yellow kukui light, and seeing that we shrank from the relic, knelt on the cavern floor and broke the thongs that bound it, muttering as he did so, in his own tongue and performing an obeisance that suggested the religious expression of primordial man.

The strange parcel, no longer than one's arm, was wrapped in tapa, the outer layer of which crumbled into tattered fragments as Mokuhana unrolled it. What the last folds of the bark-cloth covering revealed caused Azelie to clutch my arm tightly, and I could sense the tremor of revulsion that ran thru her body. The contents of the strange packet unmistakably were the fragments of a child's skeleton.

Binding the pathetic little bundle was a tiny string of beads, and from this was suspended a locket. Azelie read from it in a voice hushed and tense the name, "Kealani," and the date, "18—."

"Do you begin to understand?" she asked me, as she fingered the little trinket. "That's me—Kealani. All my life I've been that little child."

As if at a sudden recollection she fumbled at her throat to release a gold pin that clasped her collar. On the back of it, also, was engraved "Kealani."

"But your name—'Azelie'?" I inquired.

"Oh, that. It's a name I gave myself—when I went to school on the coast."

The old man replaced the crumbling parcel, and now brought forth a metal box, the top of which had been sealed crudely but effectually. When he had pried loose the lid he removed from the box in succession a tiny garment, musty with age—the dress of a very young child; a silver chain and locket; a plain gold ring, and a yellowed newspaper that threatened to fall in pieces upon the slightest provocation.

We examined them, one by one—the dress, that had a peculiar foreign [illegible]n and was of coarse woolen material; the locket, a child's trinket that bore the name "Azelie," and the ring, a wedding ring initialed "[illegible] F." On the newspaper was a marking in ink, yellowed almost to invisibility, calling attention to an article captioned "Wreck on Windward Coast."

"That name, 'Azelie,'" I exclaimed.

"I know," she whispered, in awe. "I felt it was mine—I seemed to remember. That was why I chose it. Can a child of two years have a memory like that?"

Together we bent over the newspaper in the light of the kukui nuts, and I read aloud the marked passage:

> "We regret to chronicle a distressing maritime disaster of the past week in which an entire ship's company lost their lives. The vessel was the barkentine Spirite, hailing from Marseilles, carrying a general cargo amongst which was a consignment of French wines for this port. The vessel's destination was Yokohama and points in the East Indies. Heavy weather overtook the skipper as he neared the islands. The log shows that much of his canvas had been carried away and that the rudder was damaged. This latter must have contributed largely to the final disaster, for he went ashore to windward, in comparatively easy weather. The vessel sank outside the reef, and efforts to launch lifeboats were unsuccessful. None of the crew was saved, the wreck having occurred at night and not being observed by the inhabitants of that part of the island until morning. Seven bodies were washed ashore, amongst them the bodies of two women, one the wife of the skipper, and the other her sister, the Senora Ferrara, who was going out to Japan to join her husband, charge d'affaires at the Spanish embassy in Tokyo. The body of the Senora Ferrara's two-year-old child was not recovered."

The[illegible] was more of the story, but it had to do o[illegible] with the salvage of the car[illegible] from the wreckage that lined the shore, with a description of the ship and the names of the crew.

Azelie looked up at me, her [illegible] strange glow.

"Do you believe—oh, say that you believe it!" she implored.

"Yes," I replied, "of course. But——"

"Oh," she moaned, "I know. You and I will believe, but will the rest of the world? That's what you mean?"

I nodded.

A little bitterly she tossed the quaint relics of the dead child into the box and tucked it under my arm. Then, taking my hand, she led me forth into the sunlight, leaving Mokuhana there on his knees before the urns, making peace, possibly, by means of muttered formulas and genuflection, for the deception of those long years and this violation of the sanctity of the tomb.

CHAPTER XX.

"THERE is a good deal you haven't told me—there's the why of all this," I said to Azelie, as we sat on a green carpet of mountain grass overlooking the long vista of smiling valley that widened gradually into the broad horizon of the shimmering sea.

"I know," she answered. "I must tell you all now—since you believe. You remember what father—Mr. Winter—told you on the day of your arrival here? About the will of my grandfather—the old chief? If I had died as a child or if I had married a white man when I became a young woman——"

"Yes, I remember. The property was to go into the establishment of a hospital."

"If I had died," assented Azelie. "How difficult this story is to tell! You see, I did die, and I didn't."

She puckered up her forehead into a frown that required smoothing out by a process that I thereupon administered, to the great detriment of the progress of the story.

"You see, now, don't you?" she continued, as she disengaged herself. "Father—that is, Mr. Winter—had to have me. And when I died he had to have me replaced. The little Kealani died soon after the shipwreck—the other me."

"But how have you learned this? Have you always known?"

"No, bless you! It was Mokuhana who told me."

"But Mokuhana—why did he keep the secret until now?"

"Oh, I understand that well enough. It's kahuna business. He still clings to the old faith. In a very harmless, childish way, of course, he still is a priest of the old religion. He feared Mr. Winter. He was afraid of him because he could not pray him to death. You see, Mokuhana was the head priest of the old chief's community. When Mr. Winter ran away with the chief's daughter, Mokuhana was called upon to pray Winter to death. He failed, of course, because the prayer of death could not succeed with any but the superstitious native."

"Did Mr Winter know he was being prayed to death?"

"Oh, yes. That was how he got poor Mokuhana so completely in his power. He held over Mokuhana constantly the threat of giving him up to the law. I believe he even threatened to have him put in an insane asylum. Mokuhana literally became his slave."

"Then it was thru him that you were made to take the place of the dead child and save control of the property for Mr. Winter?"

"Yes. You see it was Mokuhana who found the body of my mother. He found me, too, alive, of course, strapped tightly into a little wooden cradle. The ring from my dead mother's finger he kept, and with it the little trinkets here in this box—saving them for this day of reckoning. Mr. Winter's death unlocked his secret. For a few days he was silent. We saw nothing of him—he disappeared. Then, about two weeks after the funeral he came to me there in the little place on the Big Island—grandmother's place, you know, where I went to avoid you—and told his story. We came back on the next boat."

I was silent for a time, musing over the strange chain of events that had woven the girl's fortune.

"I suppose it was only luck that made the shipwreck serve Winter's end," I commented aloud.

"Of course. Mokuhana was compelled to find a child as a substitute for the poor little one that was dead. Some mother's cradle would have been robbed if he hadn't found me."

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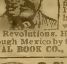

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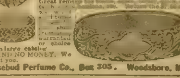

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[illegible] just how you can get a nice Shetland pony without paying a single penny for him. I have a lot of fine, gentle ponies and want to give them all to deserving boys and girls. Wouldn't you just love to have one of these [illegible]kable fellows—the finest playmate ever for any boy or girl? Just think of the fun you would have riding and driving him! Besides telling you how to get a pony, remember my book also tells about my life in the Wild West. Send me your name right away.

Write PAWNEE BILL, 506 Capital Building, Topeka, Kansas

"Poor Mokuhana," I said. "His fate has been like that of the old religion he upheld."

"Yes, the old religion became a mockery, a hideous degradation. And Mokuhana's priesthood became the means of his own enslavement."

We sat thus for long, in silence, while the shadows of the mountains lengthened into great creeping curtains, and the sun flamed crimson as it sank into the silvered bosom of the sea. Azelie roused herself suddenly.

"Mokuhana!" she exclaimed. "We must call him, and start back—home."

Together we peered into the entrance of the strange volcanic mausoleum and shouted to Mokuhana. We heard no answer, and went in. The kukui-nut candles long since had guttered out, so I groped in my pockets for matches. The first feeble light disclosed Mokuhana, prone before the urn in which rested the bones of his chief—an obeisance from which the old priest would arise no more.

* * *

As I write Azelie slips into the room and compels me to go thru the old, old business of guessing whose hands are hiding my eyes. Having kissed me for guessing right, she pouts at my work, and pushes it aside so that she can sit before me on the lacquered Japanese table, swinging her sandaled feet. She wears a kimono with a real obi about her waist, and in her hair is a flower like the ones that peer gracefully from the tall satsuma vase at my elbow.

"What's the use of writing that silly story?" she inquires. "All about poppies and opium, and islands—and things that never really existed?"

"Never existed?" I protest.

"Not really. Nothing has existed until now."

"You are very sentimental," I sigh, "and imaginative."

She laughs, and catching up the pages of the story as they have fallen from my pen she stuffs them, one by one, with a childish drollness, into a great cloisonne urn. Then she moves aside the fragile paper panels that shut out the garden, letting in the fragrance of Japanese cherry blossoms, the mellow gold of Japanese sunlight, and a far glimpse of the divine Fujiyama. After which she sits, close in my arms, cheek to my cheek, and places fresh paper before me and a pen in my hand.

"Now," she sighs contentedly. "You may write—the real story of you and me. And begin, please, at this moment."

The End.

* * *

A "True Man."

The modern young woman gazed critically at the modern young man.

"You are sure," she said, "that you wish to marry me? Nothing could alter your decision?"

"Nothing"

"In case I should accept you, would you be willing to fill in at any time at one of my dinner or bridge parties—I mean, of course, when I really need some one?"

"I should be delighted."

"You will, I presume, permit me to go away in the summer time and spend as much money as I please at any place which my fancy dictates?"

"Certainly"

"In case I should desire to roam over Europe alone, you would have no objections?"

"None whatever"

"It is necessary for me in order to maintain my position in metropolitan circles to become hysterical over all the latest fads. This means that I will probably have literary freaks, bohemian impossibilities, suffragette caucuses and other highbrow functions in our house at any time. You would welcome all of these, would you?"

"With open arms, for your sake."

"I shall, of course, have to indulge in the latest and smartest effects in clothes, no matter what the extremes may lead to I trust that this would not disturb your serenity or make you express in any way any feeling of shame?"

"Impossible! You can go as far as you like."

"Suppose that I should become eugenically inclined"

"It would be my great pleasure to praise your efforts."

The young woman moved a trifle nearer

"Just one more question," she said. "Will you go to the opera with me at the matinees every Saturday afternoon?"

Then the young man got up, folded his arms sternly and replied:

"Never! I love you dearly, I am willing to make all kinds of a fool of myself and to do anything that any metropolitan husband is obliged to do in these halcyon days, but I'll be eternally frizzled if I lose my self-respect to the extent of attending the opera with any grown woman in daylight."

"Answered like a hero!" she exclaimed, clasping him fondly in her arms. "It is the one thing that I didn't want you to do. Oh, how grand it is to feel at least that I am marrying a true man!"

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* * *

A Puzzle.

"I'm up against it all right," said Topper to his neighbor, Footin. "The canary's dead. My wife was very particular about that bird and I said I would take good care of it during her absence She will think I don't love her very much to let her beautiful bird die "

"Don't let it worry you," said Footin. "That's easy. The day before your wife gets back go and buy a new bird and she'll never know the difference. One canary is as good as another."

"Well, I never paid enough attention to the confounded bird to notice particularly what size it was. I couldn't pick out another just like it."

"Go get the dead one and take it to the bird man and have it duplicated. That's easy."

"But the bird is clean gone The cat ate it."

"Gee whiz! That is bad. Go to the same dealer she bought it from and he will, perhaps, remember and duplicate it."

"I do not know where she bought it."

"Well, then, buy any big, fat canary. That will be safe. She will think you were smart to take such skillful care of her bird as to make it big and fat. You will make quite a hit with her

"Of course, if you were to go and buy a thin, measly canary, she would think you were no good. But by pointing with pride to a big, fat one you can be safe. You must get a good singer; a better singer than the old one was. That will make a hit, too, and you can tell her something like this: 'In order to get the best results the singing canary should be fed with care. I find that the best results are obtained by feeding——'"

"Wait a minute. Our bird might not have been all yellow. There may have been some black marks on it. What about that? As soon as she sees there are no black marks on the bird she will hold me up in scorn."

"Not necessarily. You can tell her that by scientific feeding you have been able to eliminate all blemishes, and she will think you are a wonder. She will be so impressed with your superior efficiency that she will turn the care of the canary over to you for all time."

"That's all very well, but I don't know whether the bird was male or female, and my wife does. If she goes away leaving a male bird and comes back finding it a female bird she'll be pretty mad at me for pulling black art on her dear little birdkins. It won't make any kind of a hit at all."

"Then the only thing you can do is burn the house down."

"I can't even do that, for she'll blame me for not saving her poor little bird."

* * *

Old Shoes.

"I wish you would look across the street!" exclaimed Mrs. Chuddicott

Chuddicott came and looked.

"Do you see that old pair of shoes in the gutter?" said Mrs. Chuddicott. "Isn't that a lovely way to ornament the front of a house? Wouldn't the city look nice strewn with old shoes from one end of it to the other

"What's the significance of it, anyway?" asked Chuddicott "This isn't Christmas. I have heard that the Dutch put out old shoes for Santa Claus to fill. But this isn't Holland, either, so I don't understand it. Perhaps the people living there don't know that their shoes have escaped. Or perhaps there is a child visiting there and the child has been cutting its teeth on them."

"No, they must have been put there for the street cleaners to pick up when they come along," said Mrs. Chuddicott "There's a theory that the street cleaners come along and carry away all dirt from the gutters According to theory, the street cleaners come every day, but those shoes have been there days!"

"I know it! Those two old shoes look quite pathetic! They have served their master well and now at last they are turned out into the street! I am surprised that the Trimmers, eccentric as they are, would have old shoes on guard in front of their palatial home for several days! Perhaps they don't know they are there. Do you think we should tell them?"

"No, they might think we were complainin

"I have it! Trimmer threw them at a cat, altho it seems strange that they should have landed side by side like that. If I could be sure that he had thrown them at a cat I would place them neatly on his front steps, where he could get them back, for he may want them again. A man often lives to say: Oh, how I wish I had the shoes that once I threw away!' But whether dog brought them there or not, some dog will probably happen along and demolish them tomorrow so they will no longer offend your sight."

"I think I begin to see why they are there!" said Mrs. Chuddicott. "Mrs Trimmer set them out there so some needy wayfarer could pick them up and wear them!"

A very pretty custom!" declared Chuddicott. "But no one gets my old shoes, no matter how seedy he may be, I think too much of them. However, we might hang a couple of old straw hats or my bathing suit on the tree in front of our house for some poor fellow"

* * *

All a Mistake.

Mr. Whately is a very light sleeper, one who is easily awakened and is a long time getting to sleep.

One night recently, while traveling New York State, he was obliged to stop at a suburban hotel, and after much tossing about he finally succeeded in getting into a sound sleep. In answer to loud, repeated knocks on his door, he nervously sat bolt upright in bed

"What's wanted?" he grumbled

"Package downstairs for you, sir."

"Well, let it stay there. It can wait till morning, I suppose

The boy shuffled down the corridor and after a long time the guest fell into a sound sleep again. Then another knock came at the door.

Well, what's up now?" queried Mr. Whately.

"'Tain't for you, that package!"—Judge

* * *

The Question.

A newspaper man was on the witness stand, and the attorney was trying to find out something about him. "Where did you work last?" he asked

"On the Yankton Globe"

"Why did you leave?"

"The editor and I disagreed on a national political question."

"Where did you work next?"

"On the Oshkosh Item."

"Why did you leave"

"The editor and I disagreed on a national political question."

This was the reply in every instance and the judge took a hand. "What was this national political question," he asked, "upon which you never could agree with your chiefs?"

"Prohibition."

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Keeping House.

"I wouldn't worry about it," said Mopsky, in a commiserating tone to Finkbohner. "It will come out all right. Of course you will forget a lot of it. What man wouldn't? But you will pull thru somehow. Every man has to go thru the same thing. I did myself. And I could only remember about half my wife's instructions

"Good gracious! I couldn't even remember where she told me to leave the bread nickel. Things like that drive a man to the cafeterias when his wife is away.

"Where to leave the bread nickel so that the bread man could get it! That was a hard one. I was supposed to boil some eggs and make some toast. That was supposed to be easy for a fellow who had camped six weeks in the mountains. But cooking outdoors when you know where everything is seems different from cooking in the house where you can't find anything. But all would have been well if I could have remembered where to leave the bread nickel.

Then there was the refrigerator. There is a big pan under it to catch the water from the melting ice. After a while that pan gets full and runs over unless it is systematically emptied. If the pan isn't emptied a flood results.

"I was supposed to leave milk tickets out, too. The milkman comes in the middle of the night, and he'll have that ticket if he has to upset the world to get it. Milk jars have to be scoured and set out in a handy place, too, in order to keep the milkman quiet. I know all about it. But if you don't stick around home and show some signs of life the daily paper will stop, and they will turn off the gas and lights.

"Then there are flowers to be watered. There is also the woman who comes to clean the house and air things and slam around with a duster. I had to lock the door after her and see that she didn't carry off the piano.

"The fact is there are people running in and out of your house whom you know nothing about until your wife goes away. While she is away you begin to realize that your house is a thorofare.

"The dog has to be looked after and the canary bird, and there are the neighbors who are privileged to come over and help themselves to cherries. There are others to whom the exclusive lettuce privilege has been granted

"It's a hard stunt to run a house, I'll admit, but what one man has done another man can do. Brace yourself and be a man!"

"That's all very nice and encouraging," said Finkbohner. "Your wife has gone and come back again. You know the worst. But I already have a shortage of one cut glass pitcher, two canary birds, three potted plants and a globeful of goldfish to account for."

* * *

The Grievance.

Burglar—"The only thing I'm kicking about is bein' identified by a man that kep' his head under the bedclothes the whole time. That's wrong."

* * *

Once in a while a man doesn't marry because he's afraid he may have a large collection of his wife's folks to support

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Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next

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I WILL START YOU IN THE MAIL ORDER business, furnish everything if you will handle my goods. Crest Company, F, Atlantic City, N. J.

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GOVERNMENT RAILWAY MAIL, POST OFFICE, rural carrier "exams" everywhere soon. Get prepared by former Government civil service examiner. Booklet free. Arthur Robert Patterson, Rochester, N. Y.

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MALE HELP—(Continued)

I WILL START YOU EARNING $4 DAILY at home, silvering mirrors; free instructive booklet. G. F. Redmond, Dept. 400, Boston, Mass.

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FEMALE HELP WANTED

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PROSPERITY IN CANADA—$900,000,000 IN new wealth added in 1915. Enormous crops and low taxation make farmers rich. Wheat average, 36.16 bushels per acre in Alberta, 28.75 bushels per acre in Saskatchewan, 28.50 bushels per acre in Manitoba. Taxes average $24 and will not exceed $35 per quarter section, includes all taxes; no taxes on improvements. Free schools and full religious liberty, good climate. Get your farm home from the Canadian Pacific Railway. 20 years to pay. Good land from $11 to $30 per acre; irrigated lands from $35, and the government guarantees your land and water titles. Balance, after first payment, extended over nineteen years, with interest at 6%; privileges of paying in full any time. Before final payment becomes due your farm should have paid for itself. We will lend you up to $2,000 in improvements in certain districts, with no security other than the land itself. Particulars on request. Ready-made farms for sale. Special easy terms. Loans for livestock. In defined districts, after one year's occupation, under certain conditions, we advance cattle, sheep and hogs to farmers up to a value of $1,000. We want you; we can afford to help you. We own the land; we want the land cultivated. Our interests are mutual. Buy direct and get your farm home from the Canadian Pacific Railway. Send for free book. J. S. Dennis, Assistant to the President, Canadian Pacific Railway, 94 Ninth Ave., Calgary, Alberta, Canada

CHOICE LANDS FOR GENERAL FARMING, poultry, truck, fruit; small or large tracts; best county in Michigan; $10 to $[illegible] per acre; small first payment, balance easy. Write today for full information, booklet and map free. Swigart Land Co., X1249 First National Bank Bldg., Chicago, Ill

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EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself [illegible] or exchange goods or services are offered here

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WANTED, AN IDEA! WHO CAN THINK of some simple thing to patent? [illegible] they may bring you wealth. Write for "Needed Inventions," "Patent Buyers," and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." Randolph & Co., Patent Attorneys, Dept. 174, Washington, D. C.

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED. Free patentability search and report. Send sketch and description of invention. Latest and most complete patent book ever published for free distribution. (Ninety pages.) [illegible] Kimmel, 260 Barrister Building, [illegible]

"PATENTS AND PATENT POSSIBILITIES" [illegible] where to sell it. Manufacturers [illegible]tly writing for patents. Help supply the demand. Books free. H. S. Hill, 933 McLachlen Building, Washington, D.

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SONG POEMS

SONGWRITERS, POEMS WANTED. SPLENDID proposition. Prompt decision. Writers receive over $1,000,000 yearly from publishers. Royal Arranging Company, 1431 C Broadway, New York.

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BEST QUALITY NEW CLOVER HONEY. 30 lb. can $3.45; two or more cans $3.30 each. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Sample 10 cts. Price list free. M. V. Facey, Preston, Minn.

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WRITERS!—STORIES, POEMS, PLAYS, etc., are wanted for publication. Literary Bureau, B4, Hannibal, Mo.

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MARRY. WOULD YOU MARRY A REAL nice lady who could greatly aid you financially? If so, then I dare you to answer this today, as I will gladly introduce any worthy man to hundreds of ladies desiring marriage, ages eighteen to sixty, who claim to be worth from $1,000 to $25,000 and upwards. More particulars, including hundreds of descriptions of ladies with many nice, large, beautiful photos sent free to any man who answers within ten days. (No general deliveries.) Kindly enclose postage. Address "Sincere," B 529, Valley, Nebr. This notice is genuine and will stand fullest investigation.

WHAT HAPPENED TO ESTELLE. REAL life. Naked Truth. Can't tell about it here. Sent sealed. Plain wrapper, 25c. George W. Baumbach, 93 B. St. Marks Place, New York.

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HAVE FRIENDS, SWEETHEARTS EVERYWHERE, exchange; letters, postcards, membership 10c. Evergreen Club, Reynoldsville, Pa.

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LADIES TAKE COTTON ROOT TABLETS, [illegible] regulator, $1.00. Radium Mfg. [illegible]

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SOMETHING DIFFERENT. FUTURE PREDICTED. Only [illegible] birthdate. Prof Sprout, Station H, Cleveland, [illegible]

MARRIAGE PAPER, HIGHEST CHARACTER [illegible] Box 1616, Denver, Colo.

FUTURE AND PAST TOLD. SEND 10c and birth date. James Smith, 326 Madison St., Chicago.

FUTURE TOLD—10c BIRTHDATE. FLORENCE Edwards, 305 S. La Salle St., Dept. 8, Ill. Chicago.

GET MARRIED—BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Mailed free. The Correspondent, Toledo, [illegible]

MARRY RICH; HUNDREDS ANXIOUS TO [illegible] photos free. E. Unity, Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRIAGE PAPER FREE; BEST PUBLICATION for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency 55, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

WEALTHY WIDOW, 27, ANXIOUS TO marry. Box 959, Los Angeles, Cal.

Did Not Occur.

In the days of his youth Senator Blackburn of Kentucky was asked by a friend to second a duel. He consented, and at the next sunrise the parties met. It was Mr. Blackburn's duty to say the last word concerning the terms of the duel. One of the Senator's colleagues recently said at a Washington dinner that altho Mr. Blackburn faithfully performed the duty, the duel never took place.

A murmur of "Why not?" went round the table at this remark.

"For a very simple reason," continued Mr. Blackburn's colleague. "When Joe finished speaking it was too dark for a duel."

* * *

Needed Water.

Strickland Gilllian, the lecturer, and the man who pole-vaulted into fame by his "Off Ag'in On Ag'in, Finnegan" verses, was about to deliver a lecture in a small Missouri town. He asked the chairman of the committee whether he might have a small pitcher of ice water on the platform table.

"To drink?" queried the committeeman.

"No," answered Gillilan. "I do a high-diving act."

HERE IS PICTURE No. 4 IN THE $4,000 CASH HOME PICTURE-GAME—FREE TO ALL!

HOME PICTUREGAME is being conducted by The Farming Business, but is open to every reader of any of the Boyce Publications, and to all members of their families. Every one can play the game, and it's absolutely free.

HOW TO PLAY THE PICTUREGAME

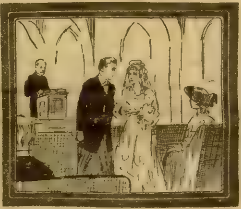
1st. You look at a picture.

2nd. You go thru the list of titles beneath the picture and pick out the best title (or titles) that fit it.

3rd. Easy, isn't it?

◆ ◆ ◆

Below we show you a sample picture and tell you how to find the best title to it. Read carefully, then you'll know just how to find the BEST titles to the regular pictures. Now look at the picture carefully.



What do you see in the picture above? You see a woman and a man who have plainly just been married. Now look among the titles below and pick out the best title to the picture. Remember, the pictures fit the titles of Jokes only, and they have nothing to do with the Jokes themselves. We simply give you the Jokes for your amusement and to make the game more interesting.

ALL FOR THE BEST

Crawford—"I see that the world's supply of drugs is being imperiled by the war."

Crabshaw—"Don't worry. Perhaps Nature will now get a chance to cure us."

BEFORE THE WEDDING

Peggie—"Jack, do you see figures in the fire?"

Jack—"Yes—gas bills."

MARRIED

Young Mother—"Oh, ma, I'm terribly worried and discouraged about baby."

Grandma—"Why, dearie?"

Young Mother—"Oh, because he is 2 years old, and he wears only 2-year-old sizes in everything."

◆ ◆ ◆

Now let us pick out from the above titles the BEST one to fit the sample picture. The title "All for the Best" does not fit the picture, as there is nothing to show that the wedding is really for the best. The title "Before the Wedding" we will discard, as the picture plainly shows that the wedding is over. The title "Married" is the BEST title for the picture. Isn't it easy and interesting to find the best titles to pictures? You'll find such a lot of fun picking out the BEST titles to the 24 regular pictures in this Picturegame. Be sure you start now.

24 PICTURES COMPRISE THE PICTUREGAME

These Pictures are drawn to represent the titles (heading or caption) of Jokes. One picture appears each week in all of our publications. Underneath the picture each week you will find a list of about 50 titles of Jokes. From these lists of titles you are to find the BEST ones to fit the pictures. To those who submit the largest number of BEST titles to the pictures will be awarded the $4,000.00 in cash prizes, and you should be able to pick out the BEST titles as well as any one.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH $1,000 CASH?

One of the Big Cash Prizes Below Should Be Yours—Play Our Picturegame and Win One of Them

First prize	$1,000 Cash
Second prize	750 Cash
Third prize	500 Cash
Fourth prize	250 Cash
Fifth prize	125 Cash
Sixth prize	75 Cash
Seventh prize	50 Cash
2 prizes of	$25.00 Each in Cash
20 prizes of	10.00 Each in Cash
34 prizes of	5.00 Each in Cash
158 prizes of	2.50 Each in Cash
290 prizes of	1.50 Each in Cash

511 PRIZES IN ALL, TOTALING $4,000.00 CASH

Full prizes will be paid all final tying contestants.

START THIS WAY TO PLAY THE PICTUREGAME

1. Send us your name and address today and we will send you all the back pictures FREE, together with the full rules, object lesson pictures, and complete information telling you all about our great Picturegame.

2. Clip out Picture No. 4 and the list of titles underneath same, which you will find in the right-hand column here. Save the picture and titles. See if you can find the best title to the picture. If you don't find a suitable title this week you may find it next week.

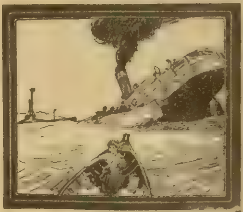
3. When you get the back pictures and titles from us, which we send you free, go thru the titles and pick out the best ones to the pictures.

4. Clip out Picture No. 5 and the titles beneath same next week. Do this until you have the complete set of 24 pictures. When you have all 24 pictures, then you send them in with the titles you have selected as the best for them. No incomplete sets will be received. You must have the complete set of 24 pictures. Therefore, be sure you get the Boyce publications each week.

5. Certainly you should have no trouble in picking out the best titles to 24 easy and interesting pictures. Start today.

You do not have to spend one cent to play the Picturegame, and we will gladly send you the Rules, showing how this can be done (see paragraphs 4 and 5) to any one that asks for it.

PICTURE No. 4



See if you can pick out from the list of titles below the BEST one to the picture above.

In [illegible]
Counting Profits
Noble Heart
Cause and Effect
Putting Him in His Place
Social [illegible]
True Love
For Her Benefit
[illegible]
The Last Word
Would Help Some
Parental Love
[illegible]
Accomplishment
Never [illegible]
By Any Other Name
The Modern Way
[illegible]
[illegible]
It Was Good
[illegible]
[illegible]
Just as Good
Carries On
[illegible]
Fixing the Date
Viewpoints
Abandoned
Defying [illegible]
Overdoing It
Their Calendar
Both Ends
In Style
[illegible]
Very [illegible]
Rural [illegible]
His Way
[illegible]
[illegible] Exaggerated
Right at Home
[illegible] Test
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
He [illegible]
[illegible]
Our [illegible]
[illegible]
Record of Profits

Cut out the picture and titles above. Save them. Cut out along dotted lines.

ACCEPT OUR SPECIAL FREE OFFER TODAY

It May Be Withdrawn at Any Time

We want you and every member of your family to play our Picturegame, and we want your name and address so that we can send you all the back pictures, the rules, object lesson pictures, and complete information how to play the game. So right now send us in the coupon below (inclose a 2-cent stamp) with your name and address, and we will in a short time, and until further notice, send you without obligation or expense, the free pictures and complete full information telling you just how to enter and play this interesting, easy Picturegame. We cannot spare the space in our publication to tell you all about this Picturegame and its many new and novel features, and also our FREE picture offers, so let us have your name and address without delay, so we can send all this matter to you free.

Name .

Street and No.

City State

TO THE BOYCE PUBLICATIONS

500-514 N. DEARBORN ST., CHICAGO, ILL.

Inclosed find 2-cent stamp. Please at your earliest convenience, send me, postage prepaid, to the address above, the Free Pictures, Rules, and general information about your $4,000.00 Cash Picturegame, so that I and all members of my family can enter your Picturegame.

Chicago Ledger

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1,250,000

COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Sarcasm is to call a green maid "help."

Some men sow cents and reap dollars.

Even a liar respects veracity—in the other fellow.

A white lie doesn't travel far before it gets a black eye.

Brevity may be either the soul of wit or the poverty thereof.

Beauty is a veil that hides many feminine imperfections.

Women who have large feet are not partial to short skirts.

Some men spend a lot of time looking for traps to walk into.

The majority of mankind follows the golden rule—at a distance.

The man who thinks he knows it all is a candidate for the skids.

We know folks who actually believe their troubles interest others.

Spring fever is a charitable covering for a multitude of indolence.

On the program of human events women are the consolation race.

A bathing suit that shrinks every time it is worn may not be immodest.

Baking powder manufacturers should succeed in getting up in the world.

Speaking of well-preserved women, Lot's wife was probably the best of the lot.

Blind people are usually smart—they have a sight of sense but no sense of sight.

The man who acts contrary to his wife's advice and falls down never hears the last of it.

Some men are such tightwads that they won't even lend trouble without good security.

What a pity it is that the most beautiful females usually have little else to recommend them.

When a woman's dress is described as a dream the cost is apt to prove a nightmare to her hubby.

Don't judge a woman by the beauty of her hair until you find out whether it is natural or artificial.

Illusions are the grand ideas we have about ourselves; delusions are the silly ideas other people have about us.

When a man tells a rich widow that she is all the world to him he may be trying to work the world for a living.

The average married man might not object to playing second violin if the orchestra to which he belongs would give only private perform[illegible]

Of course it was an Irishman who said. "If you cast a Yankee on a desert island he'll be up early the next morning selling maps of the place to the inhabitants."

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

Blazer and awning stripes are in favor in wash fabrics.

Bands of striped foulard trim blue serge suits and dresses.

Some of the new sports coats have smocking on the hips.

Four of the best dark greens are ivy, mint, forest and myrtle.

A great deal of stitching is used on suits, coats and dresses.

White chinchillas, wool velours and novelty fabrics are in favor for sports coats.

White sateen petticoats will be good for wear under thin cotton frocks which demand opaque underskirts that are not too cumbersome.

Garden hats are made of rough and Japanese straw. These hats are becoming, most picturesque and are worn with Dolly Varden dresses and a huge bag to match the hat.

❧

NEEDLEWORK NOTES.

The bluebird, emblem of hope, is a general favorite with needleworkers. It is worked in blue and makes an attractive design.

A washable corset bag can be made of white poplin. Embroider a wreath in cross-stitch in any desired color and finish with a 4-inch hem which is stitched to form the casing for a ribbon.

Something new for the cushion devotee is a simple way of covering a loaf-shaped cushion to be used as a foot-stool or the end of a couch. The stiff covering of muslin for the feathers or cotton with which the cushion is to be stuffed will keep its oblong shape sufficiently without further stiffening. A large piece of flowered or striped silk is then folded around this and wrapped exactly as you would a package for mailing purposes. At each end where the flap of the covering ends in a point a tassel secures it and adds a further decorative note.

The good part of a chemise may be joined by lace beading to a new skirt section, or you may have a chemise in which the lower part is good and which you may use when the worn parts under the arms are cut away, replaced with an underarm patch lined with lace. If the scalloped edge of a chemise is good, but there is a split between the edge and the embroidery, the edge may be cut off, the worn place cut away and the edge then put back as a finish, seamed on the wrong side, with the raw edge turned under and slip-stitched to make it as flat as possible. It would be even prettier if this edge were rolled and whipped to narrow lace and then applied to the chemise. The same finish should be used around the armholes, applied to the beading.

Persons having invalid friends are often perplexed when wishing to send some little remembrance to the "shut-in." It is not always easy to know what to send that will give pleasure to a person whose activities are limited and who cannot, therefore, take pleasure in many gifts that might be welcomed by a well person. Try making a bundle of "comfort powders." Get a book containing a page of reading for each day in the year. The book counters have many such books of all sizes and kinds. Take each leaf and roll it up tight in tissue paper, twisting the ends in bonbon fashion. Tie the bundle of rolls with a ribbon and send directions with the gift, "One powder to be taken each day." Old calendars containing choice bits of verse may be utilized in this way. If the "shut-in" would enjoy them, many bits of humorous verse can be chosen.

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HEALTH NOTES.

When the nose bleeds for no apparent reason, prop the head upon the pillows or raise the arms over the head. Roll up a piece of cotton and push it between the upper lip and gum. Press the lip firmly against it. When this fails to check the flow, fill the nasal cavities with absorbent cotton and summon a physician quickly.

One of the first cares of every woman who does her own housework should be her hands. Extra pains should be taken by her that exposure and harmful soaps shall not roughen or redden them. This is really quite a simple problem. She can have her hands continuously in soapsuds without injury to the skin if the hands are dipped in vinegar or lemon juice immediately after. The acids destroy the corrosive effects of the alkali and make the hands soft and white.

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FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

The perfect preserve closet is cool and dark.

Raisins added to the nut salad will make it taste better.

Bread should never be kept wrapped in a cloth. The cloth absorbs moisture and imparts an unpleasant taste.

To remove grease from woolen goods place the goods over a thick padding of cloth, apply chloroform to the soiled spot and rub until dry.

Before using a new umbrella or sunshade, rub a small quantity of vaseline into the hinge portion of the frame. This will not run like oil, and it is a sure preventative against rust.

Many a girl has had pairs of kid gloves ruined simply because she did not know how to save them. If gloves spotted by rain or other water are allowed to dry there is no hope for them. They are irreparably ruined. But if, while they are still damp, they are kept on the hands and rubbed gently with a damp cloth the spots will disappear. There is no use trying gasoline, benzine or anything else for water spots. A cloth dampened with plain water, but not wet, is the only remedy.

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RECIPES.

CONSOMME ROYAL—One quart stock, one turnip and carrot, three yolks and one white of egg, one-half pound gravy beef, one onion, salt and pepper. Clear the stock by mincing the meat finely and adding it to the stock with the cleaned and shredded soup vegetables. Stir all over the fire, and whisk it till it boils, when the meat will be almost colorless. Put the lid on and let it stand by the side of the fire for twenty minutes, then strain it thru a cloth till quite clear. Beat the yolks and white of egg and add one gill melted stock, a little salt and cayenne. Grease a jam jar, pour the mixture into it and stand it in a saucepan of boiling water on the fire for ten to fifteen minutes. When sufficiently cooked it will be firm. The water must not boil too quickly or the custard will be full of holes. Let it cool, turn it out of the jar, cut it into dice, and serve in the hot soup.

STUFFED BREAST OF VEAL—Breast of veal, four pounds. Stuffing: Breadcrumbs, one cup; melted butter, one-half cup; summer savory; salt, pepper; boiling water, one-third cup. Prepare veal for roasting. Make a pocket in the veal and place the "stuffing" in the pocket. Place in roaster and bake two hours in a moderate oven.

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FUNNY MARRIED PEOPLE.

"Housekeeping develops the humorous side of married life to an extent unguessed at by those who merely board. In a boarding-house or hotel neither the husband nor the wife has a chance to assert that the other is absolute master or mistress of the joint establishment. What is it, by the way, which makes humanity so anxious to prove itself badly off? The contention for supremacy in suffering always seen between two persons who are comparing woes or grievances is particularly conspicuous in the home.

"'If ever there was a man who was master in his own house, it is my husband! He has everything just as he wants it, without any regard to my wishes,' pronounces the wife; but in his own declaration of his position he is no whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

"'My wife is the cock of the walk in our joint,' he informs you, and with an agreeable mixture of figures goes on to tell how he is henpecked.

"The humor of the situation appeals to the bystander, at least, for any one who has given attention to the matter is fully aware that the men and women who dominate are almost always those who claim that they are downtrodden and imposed upon. The story of the man who was chased thru the house by his wife with the broomstick and finally took refuge under the four-post bed illuminates this. After he had been lying perdu for an hour or so, he cautiously raised the valance and peered out. His wife stamped her foot.

"'Get back under there,' she cried, but he asserted his rights.

"'While I have the spirit of a man,' he returned, with all the dignity he could muster in the circumstances, 'I will peek!'

"One dares think after this that the man who had been brought into such subjection that he habitually spoke of 'our hat' was probably a veritable domestic tyrant and was clever enough never to let his wife find it out!

"Altho there is a theory that men have more sense of humor than women, this may be questioned when household conditions are considered. Does a man laugh at his own discomfiture as a woman does? How would a man take the pleading of his wife for something 'like father used to make?' She has never tried it, but his longing has become a byword. What joy to the wife when he is hoist by his own petard!

"'My dear, these pies don't taste as mother's used to!' complained a husband. 'They are good, of course, but not the sort I was fond of as a boy. Can't you do something to improve them?'

"'I'm afraid not, dear,' rejoined the wife sweetly. 'She takes so much pleasure in making them for you that I would hate to intimate to her that you don't enjoy them as you once did'.

"Did he smile? I wonder! But I am very sure his wife would have chuckled if the conditions had been reversed."—Christine Terhune Herrick, in Lippincott's Magazine.

❧

A CASE OF NERVES.

If you should go to the doctor and tell him that you are given to being gloomy and blue at times; that you have apprehensions of dreadful things; that you are supersensitive; that you are constipated, given to headaches and vertigo, or to other similar ailments, the doctor would know that you were suffering from a case of "nerves." Naturally, when you realize that these symptoms are signposts to "nerves" you can appreciate how impossible it is for a nervous woman to appear charming and beautiful. If these facts were only understood more universally by women they would be ashamed to admit they had "nerves," and they would do all they could to cure them.

No matter how talented a woman may be, how clever, how well read, or how interesting, if she is a nervous wreck she will find that little by little her friends will see less and less of her, until in time she will find it a rare thing to have a caller. Not because the friends mean to be unkind, but because human nature is so constituted that it longs for happiness and warmth, not for sorrow and gloom.

The fundamental cause of nervousness is lowered vitality. So the wise woman will do everything she can to keep her vitality up to its highest mark. If she feels that her vitality is ebbing away she will stop everything and concentrate on building up the system, the nerve force and supply.

❧

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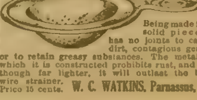

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On the Big Drive

Or, Glen Dayton's Fortune

By Milford Merrill

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Begun in No. 22, May 27. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER IX.

GLEN'S first thought was to make a determined resistance. His next was to realize the futility of such a course. He retreated as gracefully as possible, angry and indignant that his men should go into the barrooms of the town and make fools of themselves.

Out on the wooden sidewalk the boy halted and faced his enemies. Almost the first brutal visage he encountered was that of his old enemy, Blink Wade. With the quickness of a lightning flash Glen planted a blow between the sinister black eyes of the river tough. The rascal staggered but did not fall.

Before the boy log-driver could follow up his advantage, other members of the logger crew came pouring from the tavern, Eph Eckles in advance, his woolen shirt-sleeves rolled to the elbows of his hairy arms.

"I've been wanting to get you, Glen Dayton," hissed the scowling riverman, as he flourished his maul-like fists before the face of the boy. "I worked for you once, and you cheated me out of my pay. Here's where I get even!"

Glen felt that the better part of valor at that moment would have been to run. It was not in the blood of the Daytons, however, to sneak responsibility, so he stood his ground, facing the big bully. The seething mass of humanity parted, seeming ready to see the battle fought to a finish between boy and man.

The disparity in the size of the two was something ludicrous. Glen longed for Jack Adams just then, but his friend had gone off with Phil Deckford, and was not likely to return for some time yet. Drunken oaths, brawling voices and ribald laughter ruffled the scene.

"My goodness!" exclaimed a voice, "why don't somebody stop this? Where are the officers of the law—the marshal, call him quick!"

But no officer appeared. The town of Wenago this night seemed given over to the mercies of the drunken log-drivers.

"Smash him one, Eph!" yelled the smarting and discomfited Blink Wade.

With a snarl big Eph Eckles advanced upon slender yet wiry Glen Dayton. The swart face, black brows and redly blazing eyes of the logger bully were enough to terrify an ordinary man, to say nothing of a youth like our hero. Despairing of being able to overcome his antagonist, who loomed head and shoulders above him, Glen felt his hands clinching in a grip of steel. He looked dizzily at the big face, the wide mouth filled with tobacco-stained teeth, now having the grin of a gorilla. With all his strength the frightened boy hurled himself forward, his clinched right hand aimed square at the hideous, grinning mouth.

There was a dull thud. Glen fell back, quivering, sharp pains shooting the length of his arm. With a great crash the hulking form of Eph Eckles measured its length upon the dusty ground. The burly ruffian, who had defied the best men of a dozen logging camps, lay there bleeding and silent upon the ground. Since he did not move some imagined he was dead—conquered by a slender boy! Glen realized that his hand was bleeding from contact with the big teeth of the bully. He did not know until afterward, however, that his well-aimed blow had knocked out three front teeth for Eph Eckles.

The astounding feat caused a cessation of hostilities, during which Glen Dayton made a satisfactory retreat. Jack Adams met him a short time later, and congratulated him on his remarkable prowess.

"It was a chance blow," laughed modest Glen. "To tell the truth, I was badly scared, expecting to get a terrible pounding. Eckles has never liked me since that time when he led a strike among my raftsmen, which of course you remember, Jack, since you were there and did more than anybody else to smooth out the wrinkles."

Jack remembered all right, and said so.

Glen went to the home of Mr. Beaver, Jack refusing to keep him company, since he did not care to impose, as he said, on good nature. The two agreed to meet next morning and prepare for an immediate move into the upper wilderness, where preparatory work had been going on for some time in the matter of building floats, shanties and the like.

Glen had scarcely seen the old hermit of late. In fact, not since his discovery of his aunt, sick and helpless, at the house of Half-Breed Meadows had the strange man been in evidence. He had promised to aid Glen in his search for his aunt, and had thereafter wholly vanished from sight.

"I can't make him out," sighed the boy. "He is the queerest chap I ever came across. There's that fifteen hundred in the bank belonging to him which he never as much as mentioned, and it has been drawing interest for more than a year. I did intend to call his attention to that, when out he skipped, probably not to show his face again in these parts for another year."

"I shouldn't try to make him out, Glen," advised Jack Adams. "A creature like that isn't worth worrying about. No doubt he could tell more about the burning of your aunt's cottage than anybody if he chose to speak out."

"No, he is wholly innocent of that fire," firmly announced Glen.

"I'm glad you think so—I don't."

A short wiry man, face tanned to a buckskin color, met the boys as they were walking toward the stable where Black Jim was housed.

"Why, hello, Lixy!" exclaimed Glen, thrusting out a glad hand.

"Got all the men you want, Glen?" inquired the intelligent-looking half-breed. "Me'n' my boys would like to work for you on the drive."

"Well, Lixy, this is good of you, I thought you folks would stop down here and act as pilots for the lumber rafts; that is much easier."

"Mebbe 'tis, but some of these big lumber fellers got smart last year and put white men on in place of Antoine and John. I no like that. No better pilots on the river than my two boys, Glen; you know that."

"Surely I do, Lixy."

"We go on drive for you if you say so, Glen."

"Sure I say so," cried the boy. "I wouldn't have dared ask you, tho. When can you come, Mr. St. Peter?"

"Right now, if you say the word, Glen."

"All right. We are located near Howe Lake, putting things in shape to commence driving at once."

The two boys walked on.

"Who is the old guy, Glen?" queried Jack Adams.

"Alexander St. Peter of the Dam. I thought you met him last year. We call him Lixy for short."

"I heard of him, come to think," said the wide boy, "but he wasn't on his reservation, if you remember, last year, so I didn't get to see him or his boys."

"Yes, I do remember now. Old Lixy and his boys were away at Pentwater, when you were here, so you failed to meet them. Capable fellows they are, and good rivermen when they let whisky alone."

"So they like the firewater?"

"Yes."

"Like all Indians I see."

"And a good many whites as well," smiled Glen, who had hoped to get started on the drive without coming in contact with the liquor element.

In the woods at this time men sold and drank whisky without the least concealment, and some of the most shocking tragedies that took place among the lumbermen were directly traceable to the influence of poor whisky.

When Glen had everything ready it was noon of the next day. He saw no more of the man he had knocked down, for which he was thankful, since he was averse to resuming hostilities, wishing to get at his work at the speediest moment possible.

His Aunt Eunice and Mrs. Beaver were getting on together in the best of good-fellowship, which gave the boy much pleasure. When he should wind up the season's work he would build a house suitable in every way for the best woman on earth to occupy, and it should crown one of the choicest building lots in the little city of Oxbow.

Glen hunted up Phil Deckford just before noon. He found that youth in a very penitent mood.

"Never again, Glen Dayton," assured the Vermonter. "I've had my fill of this poor forty-rod whisky. Pah! It has almost killed me."

"It will kill the best of them, give it time enough," declared Glen.

"The safest place for me," avowed Phil, "is out of this blamed town, somewhere in the deepest pine woods possible to find. I don't want to see the face of anybody I know till I can straighten up and be a man. Will you help me, Glen, as you did once before?"

"I am willing, Phil, to help you all I can," answered the boy driver. "If you think you can keep away from strong drink at work on the drive, come on, the sooner the better."

"I'll be there, Glen."

"Have you any funds?"

"Just a quarter," and the minister's son exhibited his pocketbook with a sickly smile.

"Here, take this," and Glen laid a five-dollar bank note in the hand of the youth he wished to aid.

"Can you afford to pay me in advance, Glen?" blushingly asked Phil, a shamed look in his baby blue eyes.

"If I couldn't I shouldn't give you the money."

"All right, and thank you, Glen," graciously uttered the disgraced youth. "You may count on me being on hand within the week, with peevy and pikepole."

Jack Adams declared his intention of keeping Phil company, while the boy driver galloped on ahead.

It required three days' hard riding to fetch Glen to the scene of operations near the headwaters of the Muskalong. A considerable crew had here assembled. The big float was about completed, as also the cook's and men's shanties built thereon. A score of men with their rattling peevies were working along shore, rolling and shoving the logs.

Glen stabled Black Jim in an old logging shanty and went aboard the cook's raft. The man who greeted him from the open door was Jean Pebblow.

"How are you, Glen, boy?" he asked, extending his long, slim hand. Glen was puzzled, since he had made no engagement with the French Canadian. He noticed that the man was wearing a long white apron.

"Ze cook taken bad sick over at Crook Tavern," explained Pebblow. "I take hims place for a while, eh?"

"Did the cook ask you to, Jean?"

"He sure did, Boss Dayton."

Altho our hero doubted the culinary abilities of the Canadian, he made no comment.

CHAPTER X.

THE log-driving started out well. Glen had everything in fine running order at the end of the week, altho the weather was cold and damp, as so many April days are in the upper regions of the pine country. Not all the rollways were broken farther down the stream, but the boy driver believed they would be before his Big Drive reached them.

Jack and Phil joined the gang and were given peevies and told where they would be the most serviceable. Phil was yet pale and shaky from his experience at the Wenago saloons. He felt grateful to Glen Dayton, however, for taking note of his troubles and coming to his rescue as he had done in the nick of time to save him from utter ruin.

Glen passed his time going among the drivers, passing up and down both sides of the river, using as a mode of conveyance a stout Indian canoe furnished him by Indian Lixy, who, with his two boys, was at work on the drive.

After a few days of fairly successful work starting the logs, the rain began to fall, and poured down incessantly for several days. This copious downpour, added to the late melting snows, swelled the creeks and rivulets to large streams, which poured into the Muskalong, causing the father river to overflow its banks, making the log-driving work much more tedious and expensive.

Clothed with oilcloth coats, the men of the drive continued to work regardless of the downpour. As the river rose, sweeping across the lowlands, masses of logs went with the water, clogging in among the trees in a manner tending to try the tempers of the drivers in releasing and guiding them back into the main stream.

Under such conditions the work was necessarily slow. Glen, however, kept his smile, cheering the men at different points along shore. Phil grew pale and suddenly succumbed to an attack of chills and fever.

"I reckon I'm no account anywhere," wailed the sick lad, when his boss came to see him as he lay, burning with fever, in his bunk on the float.

"That's enough of that, old chap," laughed Glen, pressing the hand of the minister's son warmly. "It's just the ague, and that never kills anybody. A few doses of quinine will fix you all right."

The few doses did not do what was expected, however. As the storm grew apace the sick boy grew more restless and feverish.

"It's typhoid," said an old man who came onto the float to see one of the men, and who had stepped in to see Phil at the request of Glen.

Ominous word. Was the old bottom-land settler right? Glen did not tell the sick lad of the old settler's pronouncement. He knew that the poor boy had enough to bear without the knowledge that he was probably afflicted with a dangerous malady.

"Jick Meadows will be along soon," said Glen. "He will know."

"Then you don't believe me?" and Jerry Penoyer lifted his shaggy brows as if peeved.

"We won't discuss it," returned the

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boy log-driver. "Don't you say one word of this to Phil——"

"Don't you think the poor little cuss ought to know it, eh?"

"No, I do not, decidedly," and the lips of Glen were drawn tightly after his words. "Should you happen to see old Jick, Jerry, please hurry him up, will you?"

"I reckon I will," and the old settler was gone. His coming, however, had left a cloud behind that worried more than one aboard the float.

After several days the fever seemed to abate.

"The quinine is getting in its work," declared Glen, one morning, as he stood beside the bunk where his poor sick friend lay, breathing faintly with pallid upturned face and weary, strained eyes.

"Do you think I am better, Glen?" feebly asked the sick boy.

"Of course you are, Phil," smiled Glen. "We'll have you out of this in a few days."

"Exactly what—what did that man say, Glen?"

"What man, Phil?"

"That old fellow with the gray whiskers and pockmarked face."

"Oh, Jerry Penoyer," lightly uttered the boy driver. "He was here to see one of the men whom he knew. He knows nothing about sick folks."

"Maybe not," and Phil turned laboriously on the hard straw of his bunk, sighing deeply.

Glen watched the thin, sad face of the lad with a quickening heartbeat. Had the boy heard the pronouncement of the old busybody? If he had heard, then this was accounting for the change for the worse in the minister's son. The lad was all run down from exposure and ill habits.

Glen went out to talk with Jack, who had been detailed to look after the sick boy.

"I want you to see that he has no visitors, Jack," said Glen.

"Oh, he hasn't any since I've been looking after him," declared the Waukegan lad. "It seems a pity such a nice chap has so many ups and downs. He ought to have a doctor, I am satisfied of that, Glen."

"So am I," answered the log-driver boss, "and if Jick Meadows doesn't show up today, I'll go for one, or send a man."

The half-breed medicine man luckily showed up in the afternoon, and at once interested himself in the case of Phil Deckford. He decided quickly.

"Swamp fever," said he, shaking his head.

"Can you cure him?" asked Jack and Glen in unison.

"I never make promise," with a peculiar smile, "but Jick has cured lots worse sick boys and men."

"Good for you!" cried Glen, tapping the old half-breed on the shoulder. "The case is yours. Fetch Phil around all right, and I'll pay the bill, however big it may be."

And old Jick Meadows was as good as his word. He stopped on the float, paying strict attention to his patient. At the end of the week Phil began to mend, and with the passing of ten days the lad was wholly out of danger.

Glen allowed him to remain on the float and wait on the cook, not wishing to give him any hard work till he had fully regained his strength. He told Glen afterward that he had overheard the old settler telling the men that he had typhoid, and it was this knowledge that worked on his mind, since he believed he was doomed to die.

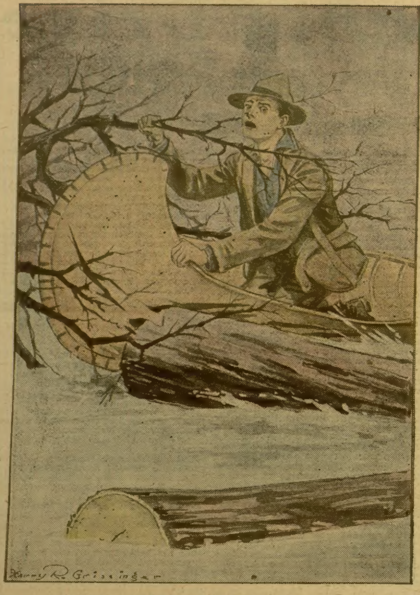
"And I felt so bad about it," smiled the lad, "when I remembered my past misconduct, and the unfilial way in which I had treated my father, that it fairly knocked me out. It is a wonder that even old Jick fetched me out."

"Imagination has a wonderful influence over our physical bodies," declared Glen. "I heard a man lecture on that once, and he said that the idea that men died but once was a fallacy; that some people borrowed death many times before actually shuffling off. I didn't think much about it then, but I now think he wasn't far wrong."

"He was right," agreed Phil. "I have suffered almost death twice, now that I know of. You don't catch me cutting up any more funny capers hereafter. It's fun for the minute, but fearful punishment afterward."

Jack and Phil had become the best of friends since the night of their bout in front of the Bowery Tavern at Wenago. The minister's son laid up no hard feelings because of the black eye the Waukegan boy had given him on that well-remembered occasion. Phil realized that he was a drunken fool at the time, and richly deserved his punishment. In fact, that knockout blow from the fist of Jack Adams had really served to bring the outcast lad to his senses, placing his feet on the rightabout trail to self-respect and future happiness.

The downpour of rain ceased at length. With its cessation Glen set all his men at work breaking a big jam that had piled up a mile below the camp. There was a two-mile jam, with the water running around one side of it like a milltail. Of course there was danger to the men while breaking the jam, and when he saw some of the oldest hands hesitate, Glen snatched a peevy and went himself to the front, driving his pike down into the key-log.



A big pine log bunted into the side of the canoe.

A shout of admiration went up, and the example of the boss was quickly followed by the braver of the crew. Soon a score of lusty drivers were at work with peevy and pike breaking the jam.

Once having got his men in shape for effective work, Glen slipped away, seeking his canoe, intent on a trip farther down the stream to look after more jams to break. After an hour he paddled slowly back in the fog that lined the shores of the river.

Mail matter was of rare occurrence in this part of the woods, so he would have to wait until they reached a settlement some miles down the stream before receiving a letter from his Aunt Eunice, who had promised to write her nephew at regular intervals and keep him posted on the goings on in the lower Muskalong valley.

A chill air blew close along the surface of the stream, the water as it dripped from his paddle-blade feeling almost like drops of ice. It was a trying atmosphere all right, yet Glen felt that he must not flinch. His health had always been of the best, and he had no misgivings as to the outcome.

The financial part of the enterprise had at first almost weaned him from his desire to take the vast river job. His few thousands in bank seemed a mere bagatelle toward the big expense of the whole. Some of his good friends among the lumbermen had come to Glen's aid at the critical moment, John A. Beaver of Wenago, and a wealthy Oxbow millowner going on his twenty-thousand-dollar bond. Now that the original contract was burned, Glen felt less optimistic, for should Shedd Weatherby take it into his head to deal unfairly with the boy contractor he would have no recourse even in law. Verbal contracts were binding only when approved by a court of law.

Glen did not believe that Weatherby would find it to his interest to go back on his word in the matter of the contract, so he dismissed the subject from his mind.

As the boy driver neared the big log-jam he heard a shout indicating that something had occurred. He was not long in making the discovery that the big log-jam was crumbling into separate pieces. The roar of the released water from above, combined with the bumping sound of the logs in collision, warned him of impending danger.

Quickly Glen twirled his ready paddle, sending his canoe athwart the swollen stream. It was almost dark there in the fog that hung low over the swirling waters. The youth plied his paddle swiftly. The canoe shot into the tangle of a fallen treetop. An instant later a big pine log bunted into the side of the thin ashen boat, crushing it like an egg-shell.

CHAPTER XI.

GLEN was struggling in the icy water scarcely an instant after the crash. The current ran strong and swift as a milltail, thru and under the treetop. The boy driver flung up his arms, caught with one frenzied hand at the wrecked canoe, the next instant going under the treetop, twisted and whirled into the deep water by the awful power of the high-water current.

Holding his breath, Glen kicked and struggled, endeavoring to regain the surface. The limbs of the submerged tree clung to him with almost human hands, holding him beneath the surface. It was then that Glen Dayton believed his last minute on earth had come. He could not cry out. To open his mouth meant strangulation, and the tree's fingers clung to his arms and his clothing, holding him in the fierce embrace of death! It seemed an age to the boy driver before release came.

The limbs of the clinging tree gave way, a strong current swept him downward and onward in one mighty whirl, bearing him, purple-faced and well-nigh dead, to the surface a rod below the treetop.

It seemed to Glen that he must perish then and there. The long time he had been under water weakened his powers of resistance. He lay over upon his back, permitting the wild waters to bear him down the stream.

Weak as he was, the boy, who was an expert swimmer, might have made to shore but for the icy chill of the water which penetrated to the very marrow of his bones, rendering him comparatively helpless. The cry for help froze on his lips. Oblivion overtook him as a sullen roar filled his ears and a monster with red mouth and shining eyes fell upon him, burying him once more beneath the flood.

When Glen Dayton again opened his eyes they were blinded by a red glare. Steam and smoke flared up toward the treetops. He stirred and groaned. At this the big red mouth, hideous with glistening white teeth, bent above him. And then came the bowwow of a dog. Glen almost laughed when he realized that his marine monster was a stocky yellow bulldog that had sprung to his rescue and dragged him out of the icy waters of the river.

"Good fellow!" gasped the shivering boy, dragging himself upright with one supreme effort. He sat shuddering against a tree. And the dog came and licked his face with long, damp red tongue, rough yet friendly in its greeting.

"Good dog, good pup!" said the half-drowned lad.

A running step was heard. Soon a boy with an armful of limbs came pushing into view. He tossed the wood upon the fire, then turned to Glen, who sat blinking, with the red tongue of the bulldog licking his hair.

"I reckoned ye'd come out of it time I got back," chuckled the thickset boy, whose rubicund countenance looked good to the half-drowned youth, even tho at one time he had scarcely considered Rube Hectare worthy of notice.

And the measly bulldog, too! How he had hated the sight of the cur! Now he owed his life to the beast, and Glen was not the boy to feel ungrateful for a favor.

"Brute did a good job all right," went on the fat boy, "when he yanked you out of the river. When I happened along jest as ye went under, I says, says I, ef Brute can't fetch him out, then good-by, Glen Dayton. 'Take 'im, Brute!' says I, and the beast went after ye like a scream. I fetched ye up here and built this fire, thinkin' mebbe you'd be half froze when ye come to yerself. How be ye anyhow, old man?"

The speaker advanced with extended hand.

"I am feeling fairly well, considering," answered the dripping boy, forcing a laugh. "So it was you and Brutus who saved me from drowning. How in the world did you two happen along just at this time? I supposed you were more than a hundred miles from here just now."

"A hundred or two miles is nothing to Brute and me," chuckled the fat lad, expectorating a stream of amber into the fire. "You remember what I told yer, pardner?"

"What was it?"

"That you'd need a choreboy on the Big Drive, and that I was your huckleberry. I meant exactly what I said, boss, and I'm here, me'n' Brute I mean, to take right holt and work. I was down to ther float, saw old Pebblow, and he said he couldn't get along another day without Rube Hectare, so yer see it's all fixed in good shape. I go to work in the morning."

"But there's Phil——"

"Oh, he's agreed. He's tired of the puttering job, anyway. Told me so himself. Wants ter git back to ther peevy once more. Everything's arranged in advance, Mr. Dayton. Ain't it, Brute?" and the speaker went to the crouching bulldog, patting him on the broad head. The dog whined as much as to say, "I'm agreed."

Glen laughed outright. He began to feel better, and this fellow's cool assumption of making himself useful rather pleased the boy log-driver.

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"I can't object, of course," said he.

"Nor do you wish to, I reckon," chuckled fat Rube Hectare, again spitting into the leaping flame. "Me'n' Brute'll be of lots of service to you 'n' the drive crew. I brought my fiddle along, so 't when the days are stormy, or the nights seem long, we can tune up and gin the lads a hoedown. I've played ter more dances than yer can shake a stick at, Glen. Me'n the French boys uster play for dancing parties right in the city of Oxbow. Was in demand by ther biggest bugs of the old town, too."

Glen felt sure there would be no dull hours about the camp while this shrewd and happy youth was in evidence. As for Brutus, he had made good all right, so that our hero meant to give the cook orders to feed him on the best fare in the shop. And the bulldog twisted his mouth into an approving whine as Glen called him to him and spoke kindly in his stubby ears.

"Yes, sir, old fatty, you shall have the best grub the shanty affords," assured the delighted young driver, patting the broad head again and again.

"You like Brute, eh?" from Rube, whose face was beaming.

"Love me, love my dog," was thoroly subscribed to by this young imp of a boy, and whoever petted Brutus found a way at once to the heart of the bulldog's master.

"How can I help loving him," said Glen, "after what he did?"

"Oh, well, he jest did that ter please me," grinned Rube. "If I'd said stay out you'd 'a' drowned like a sick muskrat."

"Then must I conclude that the saving of my life is wholly due to you, Rube?" asked grateful Glen. "If that is the fact, we might dispense with the bulldog altogether—send him back home by the first down team."

"Not by a jugful," frowned Rube. "Wherever I goes, thar goes Brute likewise. We is a couple of Simese twins, boy."

"That's what I thought."

"And we stay together. The man or boy what hurts Brute—can't many do it, anyhow—treads on my toes. You'll keep us, won't you, boss?"

The speaker stood now facing Glen Dayton with less assurance on his chubby face.

"Why, you said you had already hired out to the cook. What have I to say in the matter, Mr. Hectare?"

"Jist this: Ef ye say the word, me'n Brute gets out of here, fiddle and all. There's places we will be welcome enough and to spare. I was joshing some, I admit; I thought you'd take it in good part like a good sport, but——"

"You stay, of course, Rube."

Glen staggered to his feet, again seizing and pressing the fat hand of his deliverer most heartily.

"I reckoned how 'twould turn out," chuckled the pleased captain's son.

Glen stood by the fire while Rube went again in search of fuel. The genial warmth of the blaze was grateful to the shivering boy. The roar and rush of the down-moving logs fretted the spring air. The fog began to rise, giving place to a stiff breeze from the west.

Our hero walked back to the bank of the stream, looking for his canoe. He realized that the boat was ruined, so made no extended effort to locate it. The logs, filling the river to its low banks, moved unimpededly down the ruffled stream. It was a pleasing sight to the boss driver, this setting the apparently tough jam into action after so little effort.

Rube came and stood beside him.

"Nice lot, eh, Glen?"

"Yes, as fine a lot as ever went into the Muskalong," agreed Dayton.

The two boys stood in thoughtful pose for several minutes, Glen wondering how it would all turn out in the fall. One thing was sure, he would go to Oxbow with a large bank roll, or find himself bankrupt in purse. Much depended on the weather. An unusually dry spring and summer would make the driving job one of difficulty, and doubly expensive. It was an extremely wet season that had floored Captain Hectare the previous season, so that it seemed more than likely that a dry summer was in store for them. In any event, Glen resolved to keep pegging away as did the Union forces during the Civil War, finally winning a glorious victory for the Union.

The bulldog came along, wagging his stumpy tail, looking up at the faces of the two boys and giving a low whine.

"Go fetch it, Brute!" shouted Rube, hurling a chip far out on the moving logs. The dog shot across the moving mass with the suddenness of a lightning flash. He secured the chip and came gamboling back, slipping and sliding, yet never one losing his footing, finally laying the chip at his master's feet.

"Please don't do that again," warned Glen, as his companion picked up a second chip. "It isn't safe."

"Pooh!" and the chip went sailing far out, dropping from view in a small open space between a couple of peeled logs.

The bulldog looked wistfully up into the face of his master.

"Go get it, Brute," ordered the boy.

With a whine the bulldog darted to do his master's bidding. Slipping and sliding, following down the stream, the canine made his way. Now and then the logs rolled and ground together in masterful savagery. Glen felt sorry for the animal, whose first experience seemed to warn him of the danger. Rube stood grinning, watching, waiting.

He saw the dog reach the open space into which the chip had fallen, heard a sharp yelp as the peeled log on which he stood rolled suddenly over. There was a scramble and a bark, after which the dog disappeared from sight between the logs.

Glen and Rube both held their breath. Soon the blunt nose of the bulldog was seen above the log, where he struggled desperately to mount, with the chip between his teeth. Rube and Glen sprang down the bank. With one thought the two boys raced over the moving logs—a thought to save the faithful animal.

As the two boys reached the opening between the logs they saw only a white bit of spume where the unfortunate bulldog had been drawn from sight beneath the swiftly moving mass of logs!

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this interesting story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

MARY'S ANIMAL SHOW.

Mary had a little lamb—
  'Twas Persian—on her coat;
She also had a mink or two
  About her dainty throat;
A bird of paradise, a tern,
  And ermine made the hat
That perched at jaunty angle
  On her coiffure, largely "rat."
Her tiny boots were sable-topped,
  Her gloves were muskrat, too,
Her muff had heads and tails of half
  The "critters" in the Zoo.
And when she walked abroad, I ween,
  She feared no wintry wind;
At keeping warm, 'twas plain to see,
  She had all Nature "skinned."

* * *

Different Kinds.

"My, I shall be glad to get into the country!" enthused Mrs. Bubster. "We will have so much good milk and so many fresh eggs and fruit and vegetables and everything!"

"You may not," cautioned Bubster.

"Not get fresh milk and eggs and the best of fruit and vegetables? Why not, pray?"

"Because nobody hates fresh milk like a farmer. I might add like any member of a farmer's family. Fresh milk is too suggestive of cows and milking. The kind of farmer I have known keeps his milk until it verges on sourness before he considers it fit to drink. It tastes nice and town restaurantish if kept until that point is reached. He himself drinks milk beginning to sour, with great relish, just as if he were paying for it in town instead of getting it for nothing. If he weakens it up with a little water that adds still more to its restaurantlike palatability.

"Nor can you get any show at fruit and vegetables until the pigs and cows and chickens have had all they can eat, at least. The last time I was at Uncle Barley's I frequently got ready to have a big feast. Uncle Barley would come along carrying a lovely watermelon under each arm and I would get excited, thinking I was to have some. Just before I could express some happy little phrase of appreciation he would turn off in the direction of the pigsty. There he would break open the melons and subject them to a minute inspection. If they looked perfectly ripe and rosy, the pigs got them. If they didn't look good enough for the pigs he would toss them away. Farmers feed their pigs nothing but the best.

"Every now and then the cows would get a similar treat, likewise the chickens.

"I told uncle that I thought he should pick out the best and send them to market. He explained his position in this way:

"'The people who buy my fruit and vegetables in the city are no kin to me. I don't know that I ever saw any of them and I don't care if I ever do. I don't care whether the fruit and vegetables agree with them or not. I get no credit if they do and no blame if they don't. I don't care whether the ultimate consumer gets fat or thin on the grub. I ain't fattenin' them for the market.'

"But, you see, uncle was fattening stock for the market, so he saw to it that they had every chance."

"Well," replied Mrs. Bubster, "that may be the way with your uncle, but my uncle is different. He takes as much pride in fattening guests as in fattening his pigs. He always takes us to the scales and weighs us, both on our arrival and on our departure. If we have gained during our visit he is very proud. Yes, perhaps he does figure out how much we would be worth if we were hogs or something."

* * *

Unfair.

During his professional work the young engineer (Francis Hopkinson Smith) used to go off and take his recreation painting, says Thomas Nelson Page in Scribner's Magazine. I recall an incident which he related at that time as illustrative of a phase of the New England countryman's character.

Frank Smith had found an old water mill with overshot wheel near some piece of his work and, having esconced himself in a shady and favorable spot, he proceeded to paint a picture of the mill. His occupation soon drew the attention of the miller, who strolled over and observed him across the fence with growing interest. Finally, on the second day, as his picture grew in resemblance, the miller asked the painter:

"What are you going to do with that when it is done?"

"Sell it," said Smith, working at the finishing touches.

After a pause of reflection:

"What do you calculate to get for it?"

"Oh! One hundred dollars," said Smith, cheerfully. "Perhaps more."

"A hundred dollars!" gasped the miller.

He walked away to reflect and presently returned. His manner had somewhat changed.

"Have you asked anybody's permission to paint that mill?" he asked, leaning over the fence.

"No—I have not," said Smith, promptly, whose picture was now about finished.

"Has anybody ever given you permission to paint it?"

"No," said Smith.

"We-all, you know whose mill it is?"

"No, I do not, but I rather expect it is yours," said the painter.

"It is," said the miller, decisively, and then, as the painter made ready to leave:

"We-all, don't you think you ought to divide what you get for that picture with the man who owns the mill?"

"Well, honestly, I don't," said Smith, laughing as he bade him good day and came away leaving him still hanging over the fence pondering the inequalities of life.

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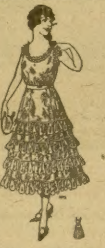

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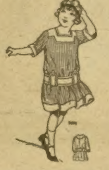

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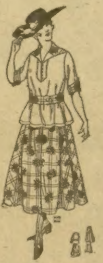

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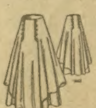
9061 Three-Piece Skirt, 24 to 34 waist.



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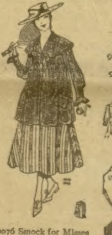

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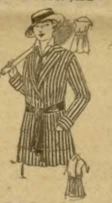
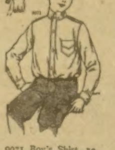
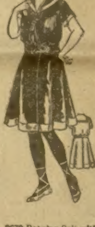


8730 Sports Coat, 34 to 44 bust.



9071 Boy's Shirt, 12, 14 and 16 years.



8679 Bathing Suit with Circular Skirt, 34 to 44 bust.

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